

2019 AL H.388

Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the Alabama Literacy Act.

Section 2. For the purposes of this act, the **following terms shall have the following meanings:**

- (1) **ALPHABETIC PRINCIPLE.** The ability to accurately apply knowledge of the relationship between letters and sounds during the acts of encoding and decoding.
- (2) **COMPREHENSION.** The ability to read and process text and understand its meaning.
- (3) **DECODING.** The act of applying knowledge of the alphabetic principle to correctly pronounce written words.
- (4) **DYSLEXIA.** A specific learning challenge that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent, or both, word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities, which typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction.
- (5) **ENCODING.** The act and process of using knowledge of the relationships between sounds and letters to spell and write words.
- (6) **FLUENCY.** The ability to read with accuracy, appropriate rate, and proper expression.
- (7) **PHONEMIC AWARENESS.** The ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds. Phonemic awareness is an auditory activity.
- (8) **PHONICS.** The relationships between the letters of written language and the individual sounds of spoken language including syllable types, morphology of Greek and Latin roots, and multisyllabic words.
- (9) **PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS.** The general understanding of the sound structure of words and sentences.
- (10) **VOCABULARY.** The body of written or oral language known to an individual.

Section 3. (a) **The State Superintendent of Education shall convene a standing task force**, within three months after the effective date of this act, **to provide recommendations for comprehensive core reading and reading intervention programs**, a state continuum of teacher development for approved science of reading pursuant to subsection (e) of Section 6, and **an 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. The task force shall meet in regular session at least twice a year. All appointing authorities shall coordinate their appointments so that diversity of gender, race, and geographical areas is reflective of the makeup of this state. **The membership of the task force shall include all of the following appointees**, each of whom shall have at least three years of experience with scientifically based reading instruction:

- (1) Two public K-12 teachers appointed by the Executive Director of the Alabama Education Association.
- (2) One public K-12 special education teacher appointed by the State Superintendent of Education.
- (3) ~~One~~ **Three** Certified Academic Dyslexia Therapist, who has been so certified for a minimum of three years, appointed by the Alabama branch of the International Dyslexia Association.
- (4) Two public school principals appointed by the Executive Director of the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools.
- (5) One local superintendent of education appointed by the Executive Director of the School Superintendents of Alabama.
- (6) One local board of education member appointed by the Alabama Association of School Boards.
- (7) One Regional Education Lab member appointed by the State Superintendent of Education.
- (8) One early childhood educator appointed by the Secretary of the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education.
- (9) One dean of a college of education appointed by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

(b) Each approved assessment system shall do all of the following:

- (1) Provide screening and diagnostic capabilities for monitoring student progress.**
- (2) Measure, at a minimum, phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle, decoding, encoding, accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehension.**
- (3) Identify students who have a reading deficiency, including identifying students with characteristics of dyslexia.**

(c) In determining which assessment systems to approve for use by local education agencies, the task force, at a minimum, shall also consider all of the following factors:

- (1) The time required to conduct the assessments, with the intention of minimizing the impact on instructional time.
- (2) The level of integration of assessment results with instructional support for teachers and students.
- (3) The timeliness in reporting assessment results to teachers, administrators, and parents.

Section 4.

(a) Funds appropriated by the Legislature in support of the Alabama Reading Initiative shall be allocated to support the following:

- (1) Local education agencies to support local reading specialists.
- (2) The Alabama Summer Achievement Program.
- (3) Regional literacy specialists.
- (4) Preservice and in-service teacher professional learning activities for elementary school teachers in reading.
- (5) Curricula to support student interventions.
- (6) State administration.

(b) Funds dedicated to the Alabama Reading Initiative shall be **expended on local and regional reading specialists, professional learning activities, and administrative activities that support all of the following activities** for kindergarten through third grade students in public K-12 schools; continued funding shall be contingent on measurable performance growth, as determined by the task force established under subsection (a) of Section 3:

- (1) Administration and analysis of reading screening, formative, and diagnostic assessments to guide instruction.**
- (2) Scientifically based reading instruction, multisensory language instruction, including oral language development, phonological awareness, phonics instruction that includes decoding and encoding, fluency, writing, vocabulary, and comprehension, and the Alabama course of study, English Language Arts.**

(3) **Explicit and systematic instruction** with more detailed explanations, more extensive opportunities for guided practice, and more opportunities for error correction and feedback.

(4) **Differentiated reading instruction and intensive intervention based on student need, including students exhibiting the characteristics of dyslexia.**

(c) Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy specialists shall provide support to local education agencies through a gradual release model, whereby the regional reading specialist shall support a struggling school until that school has improved core instruction to the extent that it is no longer among the lowest five percent of elementary schools in reading proficiency, as determined by annual results of the state summative assessment for federal and statewide accountability.

(1) Regional literacy specialists shall provide intensive support for elementary schools that are among the lowest performing five percent of elementary schools. Each school among the lowest five percent performing elementary schools shall be assigned a regional literacy specialist who shall serve as a resource for professional development throughout the school to improve literacy instruction and student achievement. A regional literacy specialist who is assigned to a school shall primarily serve only that school.

(2) Elementary schools that are not among the lowest five percent performing schools shall receive limited literacy support from an Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy specialist, who shall be assigned to multiple schools. All other regional literacy specialists shall be assigned to serve multiple elementary schools and shall provide ongoing professional development for teachers in analyzing students' reading data to impact instruction, administering and analyzing instructional assessments, differentiating instruction and intensive intervention, and monitoring the reading progress of all students a minimum of three times per year, and make instruction adjustment recommendations according to student specific need. Distance and need shall be considered by local superintendents of education when selecting the schools where a regional literacy specialist shall serve. There shall be two levels of limited literacy support provided by a regional literacy specialist. The local superintendent of education of a local education agency subject to this subdivision shall determine the level of limited support that each regional literacy specialist shall provide.

a. Limited support 1. An Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy specialist shall make monthly onsite visits to the school and shall monitor the reading progress of all students a minimum of three times per year and adjust instruction according to student specific need.

b. Limited support 2. An Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy specialist shall make quarterly onsite visits to the school and shall monitor the reading

progress of all students a minimum of three times per year and make instruction adjustment recommendations according to student specific need.

(3) An Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy specialist shall have all of the following minimum qualifications:

- a. The required Alabama Professional Educator Certificate.
- b. A bachelor's degree and advanced coursework or professional development in the science of reading, multisensory language instruction, such as Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling, or a comparable alternative training approved by the State Board of Education.
- c. A minimum of four years of experience as a successful elementary or literacy teacher.
- d. A knowledge of scientifically based reading research, special expertise in quality reading instruction and intervention, dyslexia specific interventions, and data analysis.
- e. A strong knowledge base in the science of learning to read and the science of early childhood education.
- f. Excellent communication skills with outstanding presentation, interpersonal, and time management skills.

(d) An Alabama Reading Initiative local reading specialist shall be assigned to provide intensive, targeted professional development for elementary school teachers at one school.

(1) An Alabama Reading Initiative local reading specialist shall have all of the following minimum qualifications:

- a. The required Alabama Professional Educator Certificate.
- b. A bachelor's degree and advanced coursework or professional development in the science of reading, such as multisensory language instruction, or comparable alternative training approved by the State Board of Education.
- c. A minimum of two years of experience as a successful elementary or literacy teacher.
- d. A knowledge of scientifically based reading research, special expertise in quality reading instruction and intervention, dyslexia specific interventions, and data analysis.

e. A strong knowledge base in the science of learning to read and the science of early childhood education.

f. Excellent communication skills with outstanding presentation, interpersonal, and time management skills.

(2) The duties and responsibilities of an Alabama Reading Initiative local reading specialist shall include all of the following:

a. Collaborating with the principal to create a strategic plan for coaching.

b. Facilitating schoolwide professional development and study groups.

c. Modeling effective reading instructional strategies for teachers.

d. Coaching and mentoring teachers daily.

e. Facilitating data analysis discussions and support teachers by using data to differentiate instruction according to the needs of students.

f. Fostering multiple areas of teacher professional learning, including exceptional student education and content area knowledge.

g. Prioritizing time for those teachers, activities, and roles that will have the greatest impact on student reading achievement, such as coaching and mentoring in classrooms.

h. Monitoring the reading progress of all students a minimum of three times per year and making recommendations for adjustment of instruction according to student specific need.

i. An Alabama Reading Initiative local reading specialist may not perform administrative functions such as serving as an evaluator, substitute teacher, assessment coordinator, or school administrator.

(e) The State Superintendent of Education and local education agencies shall monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy specialist and local reading specialist model, and the State Superintendent of Education and each local education agency being served by a regional literacy specialist or a local reading specialist shall maintain communication among the district, school administration, and the Alabama Reading Initiative state administration staff throughout the academic year.

(1) The State Superintendent of Education, or his or her designee, shall certify that each Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy specialist or local reading specialist satisfies the minimum qualifications provided by this act before coaches are hired with funds appropriated by the Legislature to support the Alabama Reading Initiative.

(2) The State Superintendent of Education shall develop an evidence-based accountability reporting system for the Alabama Reading Initiative that shall measure student growth and proficiency towards teacher professional learning goals and student performance on state approved formative and summative assessments.

(3) The State Superintendent of Education shall submit a report to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Chairs of the House Ways and Means Education Committee, Senate Finance and Taxation Education Committee, House Education Policy Committee, and Senate Education Policy Committee, no later than December 31, annually, on the status of teacher professional learning, student growth and proficiency against grade level standards in K-3 reading.

Section 5. (a) **To ensure that public school students are able to read at or above grade level by the end of third grade, each local education agency shall offer a comprehensive core reading program to all students based on the science reading which develops foundational reading skills. In addition, no school district may use any curriculum for public K-3 students that does not have instructional time included**

(b) Based on the results of the reading assessment in Section 3, each K-3 student who exhibits a reading deficiency, or the characteristics of dyslexia, shall be provided an appropriate reading intervention program to address his or her specific deficiencies. **Additionally, students shall be evaluated after every grading period and, if a student is determined to have a reading deficiency, the school shall provide the student with additional tutorial support.** The State Superintendent of Education shall provide a list of vetted and approved comprehensive reading and intervention programs with the advice of the task force established under subsection (a) of Section 3. **The intervention program shall be provided in addition to the comprehensive core reading instruction that is provided to all students in the general education classroom. Dyslexia specific intervention, as defined by rule of the State Board of Education, shall be provided to students who have the characteristics of dyslexia and all struggling readers. The reading intervention program shall do all of the following:**

(1) Provide explicit, direct instruction that is systematic, sequential, and cumulative in language development, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as applicable.

(2) Provide daily targeted small group reading interventions based on student need in phonological awareness, phonics including decoding and encoding, sight words, vocabulary, or comprehension.

(3) Be implemented during regular school hours.

(c) The parent or legal guardian of any K-3 student who exhibits a consistent deficiency in letter naming fluency, letter sound fluency, nonsense word reading, sight words, oral reading accuracy, vocabulary, or comprehension at any time during the school year shall be notified in writing no later than 15 school days after the identification. The written notification shall include all of the following:

(1) A statement that the student has been identified as having a deficiency in reading or exhibits the characteristics of dyslexia, and that a reading improvement plan shall be developed by the teacher, principal, other pertinent school personnel, and the parent or legal guardian.

(2) A description of the current services that are provided to the student.

(3) A description of the proposed evidence-based reading interventions and supplemental instructional services and supports that shall be proposed for discussion while establishing the student's reading improvement plan as provided in subsection (d).

(4) Notification that the parent or legal guardian shall be informed in writing at least monthly of the progress of the student towards grade level reading.

(5) Strategies and resources for the parent or legal guardian to use at home to help the student succeed in reading.

(6) A statement that if the reading deficiency of the student is not addressed by the end of third grade, the student will not be promoted to fourth grade unless a good cause exemption is satisfied.

(7) A statement that while the statewide reading assessment is the initial determinant for promotion, the assessment is not the sole determiner at the end of third grade. Additionally, students shall be provided with a test-based student portfolio option and an alternative reading assessment option to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to fourth grade.

(d) Any K-3 student who exhibits a reading deficiency at any time, as provided in subsection (b), shall receive an individual reading improvement plan no later than 30 days after the identification of the reading deficiency.

(1) The reading improvement plan shall be created by the teacher, principal, other pertinent school personnel, and the parent or legal guardian of the student, and shall describe the evidence-based reading intervention services, including dyslexia specific intervention services, that the student shall receive to improve the reading deficit.

(2) Each identified student shall receive intensive reading intervention until the student no longer has a deficiency in reading, as determined by a State Board of Education approved reading assessment.

(3) Funds allocated to procuring curricula for student interventions pursuant to subdivision (5) of subsection (a) of Section 4 shall be divided, based on a per pupil allocation determined by the number of students of each local education agency who are not proficient on a state approved reading assessment during the prior academic year, and distributed by the State Superintendent of Education.

(e) Each local education agency shall provide summer reading camps to all K-3 students identified with a reading deficiency as described in subsection (b).

(1) Summer reading camps shall be staffed with highly effective teachers of reading as demonstrated by student reading performance data, completion of multisensory structured language education, and teacher performance evaluations.

(2) The highly effective teacher of reading shall provide direct, explicit, and systematic reading intervention services and supports to improve any identified area of reading deficiency.

(3) Summer reading camps, at a minimum, shall include 70 hours of time in scientifically based reading instruction and intervention.

(4) A State Board of Education approved reading assessment system shall be administered at the beginning and end of the summer reading camp to measure student progress.

(5) Summer reading camps may be held in conjunction with existing summer programs in the school district or in partnership with community-based summer programs, designated as effective by the State Superintendent of Education and the task force established under subsection (a) of Section 3.

(f) The Alabama Summer Achievement Program is established and shall be available to all K-3 students in public elementary schools that are among the lowest performing five percent of elementary schools.

(1) The program shall be administered and funded by the allocation provided in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of Section 4.

(2) Funds allocated to the program in excess of the amount needed to fully fund summer programs in public elementary schools that are among the lowest five percent performing schools shall be divided, based on a per pupil allocation, and distributed by the State Superintendent of Education, to support high quality summer camps at elementary schools that are not among the lowest five percent performing elementary schools. The State Superintendent of Education shall award the funds to each local education agency based on the number of students who

scored deficient, as determined by the task force established under subsection (a) of Section 3, on a state approved reading assessment used to determine reading proficiency during the administration of the assessment during the preceding academic year.

(3) The State Superintendent of Education shall provide guidelines for the administration of the Alabama Summer Achievement Program, and shall oversee all of the following:

a. The administration of the Alabama Summer Achievement Program in the lowest five percent performing elementary schools.

b. The response to instruction process in the lowest five percent performing elementary schools.

c. The Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy specialists and local reading specialists.

d. All other aspects of implementation of this act including, but not limited to, collaboration among State Department of Education staff and the task force established under subsection (a) of Section 3 to improve the reading proficiency of public K-3 students and implementation of rules adopted by the State Board of Education.

e. The implementation of rules adopted by the State Board of Education pertaining to dyslexia.

f. Collaboration with the Alabama Reading Initiative state staff and the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education for appropriate professional learning approved by the State Department of Education.

g. The development of guidelines for identifying the characteristics of dyslexia.

(g) Any incoming third grade student identified with a reading deficiency shall be provided more intensified reading interventions to improve his or her specific reading deficiency. Reading intervention services shall include effective instructional strategies to accelerate student progress. Each local education agency shall conduct a review of student reading improvement plans for all incoming third grade students identified with a reading deficiency. The review shall address additional supports and services, as described in this section, necessary to improve any identified area of reading deficiency. The local education agency shall provide all of the following services for third grade students identified with a reading deficiency, and those services may be funded with funds received through the allocation provided in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of Section 4:

(1) An effective or highly effective teacher of reading as demonstrated by student reading performance data and teacher performance evaluations.

(2) Reading intervention services and supports to improve any identified area of reading deficiency including, but not limited to, all of the following:

a. Additional instructional time devoted to scientifically based and evidence based reading instruction and intervention.

b. The use of evidence based reading strategies or programs, or both, that have been vetted and approved by the State Superintendent of Education and the task force established under subsection (a) of Section 3, that have demonstrated proven results in accelerating student reading achievement within the same school year.

c. Daily targeted small group reading intervention based on student need.

d. Explicit and systematic instruction with more detailed explanations, more extensive opportunities for guided practice, and more opportunities for error correction and feedback.

e. Frequent monitoring of the progress of the reading skills of each student throughout the school year and adjusting instruction according to student need.

(3) Before school or after school, or both, supplemental evidence-based reading intervention delivered by a teacher or tutor with specialized reading training.

(4) A read at home plan, including participation in parent training workshops or regular parent guided home reading activities.

(h) Commencing with the 2021-2022 school year, third grade students shall demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to fourth grade. Students shall be provided all of the following options to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to fourth grade, and the State Superintendent of Education shall provide guidelines for the implementation of this subsection:

(1) Scoring above the lowest achievement level, as determined by rule of the State Board of Education, on a board approved assessment in reading as provided in Section 3.

(2) Earning an acceptable score on an alternative standardized reading assessment as determined and approved by the State Superintendent of Education.

(3) Demonstrating mastery of ~~all third grade~~ third grade minimum essential state reading standards as evidenced by a student reading portfolio. The State Superintendent of Education and the task force established under subsection (a) of Section 3 shall establish criteria for ~~the~~ minimum essential standards and

the student reading portfolios and a definition of what constitutes mastery of all third grade state reading standards.

(i) If a student does not demonstrate sufficient reading skills on one of the three options listed in subsection (h) and does not qualify for a good cause exemption, the student may not be promoted to fourth grade.

(j) A local education agency may only exempt students from mandatory retention, as provided in subsection (i), for good cause. A student who is promoted to fourth grade with a good cause exemption shall continue to receive intensive reading intervention that includes specific reading strategies prescribed in the individual reading improvement plan of the student until the deficiency is improved. The local education agency shall assist schools and teachers with the implementation of reading strategies that research has shown to be successful in improving reading among students with reading difficulties. Good cause exemptions shall be limited to the following:

(1) Students with disabilities whose Individual Education Plan indicates that participation in the statewide assessment program is not appropriate, consistent with state law.

(2) Students identified as English language learners who have had less than two years of instruction in English as a second language.

(3) Students with disabilities who participate in the statewide English language arts reading assessment and who have an Individual Education Plan or a Section 504 plan that reflects that the student has received intensive reading intervention for more than two years and who still demonstrates a deficiency in reading and was previously retained in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade.

(4) Students who have received intensive reading intervention for two or more years and who still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who were previously retained in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade for a total of two years.

(k) No student shall be retained more than twice in kindergarten through third grade.

(l) A request to exempt a student from the mandatory retention requirement using one of the good cause exemptions listed in subsection (j) shall be made consistent with the following:

(1) Documentation shall be submitted to the school principal from the teacher of the student that indicates that the promotion of the student is appropriate. Documentation shall include a statement identifying which good cause exemption is requested, as well as the existing reading improvement plan or Individual Education Plan of the student, as applicable.

(2) The school principal shall review the recommendation of the teacher, determine if the student meets one of the good cause exemptions, and shall make his or her

determination in writing to the local superintendent of education. The local superintendent of education, in writing, shall approve or reject the recommendation of the school principal.

(3) The local education agency shall assist schools under its jurisdiction 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. Notice shall clearly state the reasons why the student is not eligible for a good cause exemption and shall include a description of the proposed interventions and supports that shall be provided to the student to improve any identified area of reading deficiency during the retained year.

(4) There shall be established at each school, as applicable, an intensive acceleration for any student retained in third grade. In addition to the criteria established in subdivisions (1) to (4), inclusive, of subsection (g), the intensive acceleration shall be taught by a highly effective teacher of reading who has received training in the science of reading and multisensory language instruction, as demonstrated by student reading performance data and teacher performance evaluations; shall have a reduced teacher-student ratio; and shall provide explicit and systematic reading instruction and intervention for the majority of student contact time each day.

(m) Annually, on or before September 30, each local education agency shall report in writing to the State Superintendent of Education the following information on the previous school year:

(1) By grade, the number and percentage of all K-3 students identified with a reading deficiency on a State Department of Education approved reading assessment.

(2) By grade, the number and percentage of students screened for dyslexia characteristics, the number and percentage of students identified as demonstrating the characteristics of dyslexia and receiving dyslexia specific intervention, and the name of the dyslexia specific intervention being provided.

(3) By grade, the number and percentage of all K-3 students performing on grade level or above on a State Board of Education approved reading assessment.

(4) The total number and percentage of students starting third grade with a reading deficiency, which shall include the specific area of reading deficiency.

(5) The total number and percentage of third grade students who started third grade with a reading deficiency but completed third grade on grade level as determined by the third grade state standardized assessment in reading.

(6) By grade, the total number and percentage of eligible K-3 students who attended the Alabama Summer Achievement Program or other mandatory summer reading camp.

(7) By grade, pre and post Alabama Summer Achievement Program reading assessment scores and other mandatory summer camp data.

(8) By grade, the number and percentage of all students retained in grades K-3.

(9) The total number and percentage of students in third grade who demonstrated sufficient reading skills for promotion on the alternative reading assessment.

(10) The total number and percentage of students in third grade who were promoted for good cause, by each category of good cause specified in subsection (j).

(11) In succeeding years, the performance of students promoted with a good cause on the state standardized assessment in reading.

(12) By school, the number of teachers who are participating in or have completed professional development in the science of reading and who hold advanced certifications in those areas.

(13) 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 rule of the State Board of Education.

(n) The State Superintendent of Education shall establish a uniform format for local school systems to use in reporting the information required by subsection (m). The format shall be developed with input from local education agencies and shall be provided to each local education agency no later than 90 days before the annual due date. Annually, on or before December 1, the State Superintendent of Education shall compile the information received from the local education agencies into state level summary information and report the information to the State Board of Education, the public, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Chairs of the House Ways and Means Education Committee and Senate Finance and Taxation Education Committee.

(1) The State Superintendent of Education and the task force established under subsection (a) of Section 3 shall establish annual reading growth and proficiency targets based on the information required to be reported to the superintendent in subsection (m).

(2) Of the funds allocated to the Alabama Reading Initiative pursuant to subdivision (6) of subsection (a) of Section 4 for state administration, the State Superintendent of Education may allocate such sums as he or she deems appropriate to establish an

Alabama Reading Initiative Incentive Program that shall distribute monetary incentives to schools based on a formula, approved by the State Superintendent of Education with the Alabama Committee on Grade Level Reading created in Section 7, that shall factor the size and geography of the school, reading growth and proficiency, and the composition of student subgroups.

Section 6. (a) The State Superintendent of Education shall develop, and the State Board of Education shall approve, a dyslexia therapist certification endorsement on or before December 31, 2019.

(1) K-12 [and Early Childhood](#) teachers who have completed an International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council endorsed training course and have received a passing score on the Academic Language Therapy Association's Certified Academic Language Therapy assessment, or the International Dyslexia Association's Knowledge and Practice Examination of Effective Reading Instruction, and who hold a valid Professional Educator Certificate shall be eligible for a dyslexia therapist endorsement.

(2) Teacher preparation programs at public colleges and universities in the state shall offer dyslexia therapy teacher preparation courses that are approved by the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council or the International Dyslexia Association. Multi-institutional consortia or affiliations to assure access to these courses is acceptable.

(3) Subject to appropriations from the Legislature, the State Superintendent of Education and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education shall develop and approve a dyslexia therapist endorsement incentive, which shall be available to teachers who attain the dyslexia therapist endorsement, ~~with direct student contact~~. The State Superintendent of Education shall construct parameters for earning the dyslexia therapist endorsement incentive.

(b) All teacher preparation programs authorized to prepare students for state licensure shall seek accreditation by the council or association for the accreditation of educator preparation on or before December 31, 2020.

(c) The State Department of Education shall provide to public [and private](#) universities, on an annual basis, the information required for those institutions to comply with council for the accreditation of educator preparation standard four requirements for accreditation. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education shall convene the public university deans of education to facilitate the development of a format for the data needed for accreditation compliance, and work with the State Superintendent of Education to establish effective and timely reporting processes.

(d) As a requirement of initial licensure, beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, candidates for initial elementary certification shall receive a passing score, as determined by the State Board of Education, which shall base its determination on

the national score average during the preceding academic year, on ~~the Foundations of Reading~~ a foundational reading assessment for entry level teachers of reading. Beginning with the graduating class of 2021, teachers seeking an initial ~~elementary certification who have passed the EdTPA and Foundations of Reading Assessment~~ may no longer be required to pass the Praxis 5204 Teaching Reading assessment. elementary certification who have passed the EdTPA and a foundational reading assessment may no longer be required to pass an additional reading assessment.

(e) Beginning with the 2020-2021 academic year, public teacher preparation programs leading to the attainment of an initial elementary teaching certification shall require no less than nine credit hours of reading or literacy coursework, or both, based on the science of learning to read, including multisensory strategies in foundation reading skills. The nine credit hours of reading or literacy coursework shall be incorporated within the current credit hours currently approved for the degree program and not require additional credit hours for graduation.

(f) The standing task force created by Section 3, state public teacher preparation programs, and regional professional development inservice centers shall work together 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. The State Superintendent of Education and the regional inservice centers shall provide preservice and inservice elementary teachers with all of the following professional learning activities:

(1) Mentoring and shadowing with master teachers selected by Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy specialists and local reading specialists.

(2) Job embedded, classroom-based coaching in the teaching of reading for the first five years of a teacher's career.

(3) Curricula and resources in all of the following reading content areas:

a. Oral language development.

b. Phonemic awareness.

c. Phonics.

d. Fluency.

e. Vocabulary.

f. Writing.

g. Comprehension.

Section 7. (a) The State Superintendent of Education shall establish the Alabama Committee on Grade Level Reading. The committee shall consist of three members appointed from each State Board of Education district. The Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall each appoint one member from each district. The appointing authorities shall coordinate their appointments so that diversity of gender, race, and geographical areas is reflective of the makeup of this state.

(b) Each member of the committee shall be a parent or legal guardian of a state K-12 public school student, a practicing teacher, a retired teacher, or employed in the field of education.

(c) On or before June 30, 2020, the committee shall revise the 2011 Alabama Action Plan for Literacy Birth Through Grade 12 in consultation with the Campaign for Grade Level Reading group, which shall be presented to the Governor, the State Superintendent of Education, the State Board of Education, and the Chairs of the House Education Policy Committee and the Senate Education Policy Committee.

(d) The committee shall provide recommendations to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Chairs of the House Education Policy Committee and the Senate Education Policy Committee on implementing this act and shall provide standing oversight over the quality of professional learning and program quality. The committee shall provide recommendations to the State Superintendent of Education, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Chairs of the House Education Policy Committee and the Senate Education Policy Committee on adopting innovative strategies and programming to improve the effectiveness of this act.

(e) Each member of the committee shall receive the same travel expense allowance as is paid to state employees for travel in the service of the committee, subject to available appropriations.

Section 8. The State Superintendent of Education shall provide technical assistance to local education agencies in complying with this act. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules as necessary to implement and enforce this act.

Section 9. This act shall become effective on the first day of the third month following its passage and approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.