

1 HB388  
2 196854-2  
3 By Representatives Collins and Baker  
4 RFD: Education Policy  
5 First Read: 09-APR-19

2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8 SYNOPSIS: This bill would establish the Alabama  
9 Literacy Act.

10 This bill would implement steps to improve  
11 the reading proficiency of public school  
12 kindergarten to third grade students and ensure  
13 that every student completing the third grade is  
14 able to read at or above grade level.

15  
16 A BILL  
17 TO BE ENTITLED  
18 AN ACT

19  
20 Relating to public education; to establish the  
21 Alabama Literacy Act; to implement steps to improve the  
22 reading proficiency of public school kindergarten to third  
23 grade students and ensure that those students are able to read  
24 at or above grade level by the end of the third grade by  
25 monitoring the progression of each student from one grade to  
26 another, in part, by his or her proficiency in reading.  
27 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

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

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

5                   (1) ALPHABETIC PRINCIPLE. The ability to accurately  
6 apply knowledge of the relationship between letters and sounds  
7 during the acts of encoding and decoding.

8                   (2) COMPREHENSION. The ability to read and process  
9 text and understand its meaning.

10                  (3) DECODING. The act of applying knowledge of the  
11 alphabetic principle to correctly pronounce written words.

12                  (4) DYSLEXIA. A specific learning challenge that is  
13 neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties  
14 with accurate or fluent, or both, word recognition and by poor  
15 spelling and decoding abilities, which typically result from a  
16 deficit in the phonological component of language that is  
17 often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and  
18 the provision of effective classroom instruction.

19                  (5) ENCODING. The act and process of using knowledge  
20 of the relationships between sounds and letters to spell and  
21 write words.

22                  (6) FLUENCY. The ability to read with accuracy,  
23 appropriate rate, and proper expression.

24                  (7) PHONEMIC AWARENESS. The ability to hear,  
25 identify, and manipulate individual sounds. Phonemic awareness  
26 is an auditory activity.

1           (8) PHONICS. The relationships between the letters  
2 of written language and the individual sounds of spoken  
3 language including syllable types, morphology of Greek and  
4 Latin roots, and multisyllabic words.

5           (9) PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS. The general  
6 understanding of the sound structure of words and sentences.

7           (10) VOCABULARY. The body of written or oral  
8 language known to an individual.

9           Section 3. (a) The State Superintendent of Education  
10 shall convene a standing task force, within three months after  
11 the effective date of this act, to provide the board with  
12 continuing recommendations for comprehensive core reading and  
13 reading intervention programs, a state continuum of teacher  
14 development for approved science of reading pursuant to  
15 subsection (e) of Section 6, and an annual list of vetted and  
16 approved assessments which are valid and reliable reading  
17 screening, formative, and diagnostic assessment systems for  
18 selection and use by local education agencies. The task force  
19 shall meet in regular session at least twice a year. All  
20 appointing authorities shall coordinate their appointments so  
21 that diversity of gender, race, and geographical areas is  
22 reflective of the makeup of this state. The membership of the  
23 task force shall include all of the following appointees, each  
24 of whom shall have at least three years of experience with  
25 scientifically based reading instruction:

26           (1) Two public K-12 teachers appointed by the  
27 Executive Director of the Alabama Education Association.

1           (2) One public K-12 special education teacher  
2 appointed by the State Department of Education.

3           (3) One Certified Academic Dyslexia Therapist, who  
4 has been so certified for a minimum of three years, appointed  
5 by the Alabama branch of the International Dyslexia  
6 Association.

7           (4) Two public school principals appointed by the  
8 Board of Directors of the Council for Leaders in Alabama  
9 Schools.

10          (5) One local superintendent of education appointed  
11 by the Board of Directors of the School Superintendents of  
12 Alabama.

13          (6) One local board of education member appointed by  
14 the Alabama Association of School Boards.

15          (7) One regional education lab member appointed by  
16 the State Superintendent of Education.

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

19           (1) Provide screening and diagnostic capabilities  
20 for monitoring student progress.

21           (2) Measure, at a minimum, phonological awareness,  
22 the alphabetic principle, decoding, encoding, accuracy,  
23 vocabulary, and comprehension.

24           (3) Identify students who have a reading deficiency,  
25 including identifying students with characteristics of  
26 dyslexia.

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

5 (1) The time required to conduct the assessments,  
6 with the intention of minimizing the impact on instructional  
7 time.

8 (2) The level of integration of assessment results  
9 with instructional support for teachers and students.

10 (3) The timeliness in reporting assessment results  
11 to teachers, administrators, and parents.

12 Section 4. (a) Funds appropriated by the Legislature  
13 in support of the Alabama Reading Initiative shall be  
14 allocated as follows:

15 (1) Sixty-six percent shall be allocated to local  
16 education agencies to support local reading specialists.

17 (2) Thirteen percent shall be allocated for the  
18 Alabama Summer Achievement Program.

19 (3) Ten percent shall be allocated for regional  
20 literacy specialists.

21 (4) Six percent shall be allocated for preservice  
22 and inservice teacher professional learning activities for  
23 elementary school teachers in reading.

24 (5) Three percent shall be allocated to procure  
25 curricula to support student interventions.

26 (6) Two percent shall be reserved for state  
27 administration.

1 (b) Funds dedicated to the Alabama Reading  
2 Initiative shall be expended on local and regional reading  
3 specialists, professional learning activities, and  
4 administrative activities that support all of the following  
5 activities for kindergarten through third grade students in  
6 public K-12 schools; continued funding shall be contingent on  
7 measurable performance growth:

8 (1) Administration and analysis of reading  
9 screening, formative, and diagnostic assessments to guide  
10 instruction.

11 (2) Scientifically based reading instruction,  
12 multisensory language instruction, including oral language  
13 development, phonological awareness, phonics instruction that  
14 includes decoding and encoding, fluency, writing, vocabulary,  
15 and comprehension, and the Alabama course of study, English  
16 Language Arts.

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

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

24 (c) Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy  
25 specialists shall provide support to local education agencies  
26 through a gradual release model, whereby the regional reading  
27 specialist shall support a struggling school until that school

1 has improved core instruction to the extent that it is no  
2 longer among the lowest five percent of elementary schools in  
3 reading proficiency, as determined by annual results of the  
4 state summative assessment for federal and statewide  
5 accountability.

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

15 (2) Elementary schools that are not among the lowest  
16 five percent performing schools shall receive limited literacy  
17 support from an Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy  
18 specialist, who shall be assigned to multiple schools. All  
19 other regional literacy specialists shall be assigned to serve  
20 multiple elementary schools and shall provide ongoing  
21 professional development for teachers in analyzing students'  
22 reading data to impact instruction, administering and  
23 analyzing instructional assessments, differentiating  
24 instruction and intensive intervention, and monitoring the  
25 reading progress of all students a minimum of three times per  
26 year, and adjust instruction according to student specific  
27 need. Distance and need shall be considered by local



1 superintendents of education when selecting the schools where  
2 a regional literacy specialist shall serve. There shall be two  
3 levels of limited literacy support provided by a regional  
4 literacy specialist. The local superintendent of education of  
5 a local education agency subject to this subdivision shall  
6 determine the level of limited support that each regional  
7 literacy specialist shall provide.

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

13 b. Limited support 2. An Alabama Reading Initiative  
14 regional literacy specialist shall make quarterly onsite  
15 visits to the school and shall monitor the reading progress of  
16 all students a minimum of three times per year and adjust  
17 instruction according to student specific need.

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

21 a. A master's degree and advanced coursework or  
22 professional development in the science of reading,  
23 multisensory language instruction, such as Language Essentials  
24 for Teachers of Reading and Spelling, or a comparable  
25 alternative training approved by the State Board of Education.

26 b. A minimum of five years of experience as a  
27 successful elementary or literacy teacher.

1           c. A knowledge of scientifically based reading  
2 research, special expertise in quality reading instruction and  
3 intervention, dyslexia specific interventions, and data  
4 analysis.

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

7           e. Excellent communication skills with outstanding  
8 presentation, interpersonal, and time management skills.

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

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

16           a. A bachelor's degree and advanced coursework or  
17 professional development in reading, such as multisensory  
18 language instruction, or comparable alternative training  
19 approved by the State Board of Education.

20           b. A minimum of three years of experience as a  
21 successful elementary or literacy teacher.

22           c. A knowledge of scientifically based reading  
23 research, special expertise in quality reading instruction and  
24 intervention, dyslexia specific interventions, and data  
25 analysis.

26           d. Extensive experience with and understanding of  
27 elementary aged students.

1 e. Excellent communication skills with outstanding  
2 presentation, interpersonal, and time management skills.

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

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

8 b. Facilitating schoolwide professional development  
9 and study groups.

10 c. Modeling effective reading instructional  
11 strategies for teachers.

12 d. Coaching and mentoring teachers daily.

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

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

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

23 h. Monitoring the reading progress of all students a  
24 minimum of three times per year and adjusting instruction  
25 according to student specific need.

26 i. An Alabama Reading Initiative local reading  
27 specialist may not perform administrative functions such as

1 serving as an evaluator, substitute teacher, assessment  
2 coordinator, or school administrator.

3 (e) The State Department of Education and local  
4 education agencies shall monitor the implementation and  
5 effectiveness of the Alabama Reading Initiative regional  
6 literacy specialist and local reading specialist model, and  
7 the State Department of Education and each local education  
8 agency being served by a regional literacy specialist or a  
9 local reading specialist shall maintain communication among  
10 the district, school administration, and the Alabama Reading  
11 Initiative state administration staff throughout the academic  
12 year.

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

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

25 (3) The State Superintendent of Education shall  
26 submit a report to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of  
27 Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and

1 the Chairs of the House Ways and Means Education Committee and  
2 Senate Finance and Taxation Education Committee, no later than  
3 December 31, annually, on the status of teacher professional  
4 learning, student growth and proficiency against grade level  
5 standards in K-3 reading.

6 Section 5. (a) To ensure that public school students  
7 are able to read at or above grade level by the end of third  
8 grade, each local education agency shall offer a comprehensive  
9 core reading program to all students based on the science of  
10 reading which develops foundational reading skills.

11 (b) Based on the results of the reading assessment  
12 in Section 3, each K-3 student who exhibits a reading  
13 deficiency, or the characteristics of dyslexia, shall be  
14 provided an appropriate reading intervention program to  
15 address his or her specific deficiencies. The State  
16 Superintendent of Education shall provide a list of vetted and  
17 approved comprehensive reading and intervention programs with  
18 the advice of the task force established under subsection (a)  
19 of Section 3. The intervention program shall be provided in  
20 addition to the comprehensive core reading instruction that is  
21 provided to all students in the general education classroom.  
22 Dyslexia specific intervention, as defined by rule of the  
23 State Board of Education, shall be provided to students who  
24 have the characteristics of dyslexia. The reading intervention  
25 program shall do all of the following:

26 (1) Provide explicit, direct instruction that is  
27 systematic, sequential, and cumulative in language

1 development, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency,  
2 vocabulary, and comprehension, as applicable.

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

7 (3) Be implemented during regular school hours.

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

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

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

22 (3) A description of the proposed evidence-based  
23 reading interventions and supplemental instructional services  
24 and supports that shall be proposed for discussion while  
25 establishing the individual reading improvement plan as  
26 provided in subsection (d).

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

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

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

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

18           (d) Any K-3 student who exhibits a reading  
19 deficiency at any time, as provided in subsection (b), shall  
20 receive an individual reading improvement plan no later than  
21 30 days after the identification of the reading deficiency.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

4           (5) Summer reading camps may be held in conjunction  
5 with existing summer programs in the school district or in  
6 partnership with community-based summer programs, designated  
7 as effective by the State Department of Education.

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

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

15           (2) Funds allocated to the program in excess of the  
16 amount needed to fully fund summer programs in public  
17 elementary schools that are among the lowest five percent  
18 performing schools shall be divided, based on a per pupil  
19 allocation, and distributed by the State Superintendent of  
20 Education, to support high quality summer camps at elementary  
21 schools that are not among the lowest five percent performing  
22 elementary schools. The State Superintendent of Education  
23 shall award the funds to each local education agency based on  
24 the number of students who scored deficient, as determined by  
25 the State Board of Education, on a state approved reading  
26 assessment used to determine reading proficiency during the

1 administration of the assessment during the preceding academic  
2 year.

3 (3) The Office of Success, established within the  
4 State Department of Education, shall administer the Alabama  
5 Summer Achievement Program. The Director of the Office of  
6 Success shall be an education specialist who maintains  
7 certification as a literacy specialist with credentials  
8 recognized by the Academic Language Therapy Association or the  
9 International Dyslexia Association. The Office of Success  
10 shall oversee all of the following:

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

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

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

18 d. The implementation of rules adopted by the State  
19 Board of Education pertaining to dyslexia.

20 e. Collaboration with the Alabama Reading Initiative  
21 state staff for appropriate professional learning approved by  
22 the State Department of Education.

23 f. The development of guidelines for identifying the  
24 characteristics of dyslexia.

25 (g) Any incoming third grade student identified with  
26 a reading deficiency shall be provided more intensified  
27 reading interventions to remedy his or her specific reading

1 deficiency. Reading intervention services shall include  
2 effective instructional strategies to accelerate student  
3 progress. Each local education agency shall conduct a review  
4 of student reading improvement plans for all incoming third  
5 grade students identified with a reading deficiency. The  
6 review shall address additional supports and services, as  
7 described in this section, necessary to remedy any identified  
8 area of reading deficiency. The local education agency shall  
9 provide all of the following services for third grade students  
10 identified with a reading deficiency, and those services may  
11 be funded with funds received through the allocation provided  
12 in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of Section 4:

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

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

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

22 b. The use of evidence based reading strategies or  
23 programs, or both, that have been vetted and approved by the  
24 State Department of Education, that have demonstrated proven  
25 results in accelerating student reading achievement within the  
26 same school year.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4           (3) Demonstrating mastery of all third grade state  
5 reading standards as evidenced by a student reading portfolio.  
6 The State Board of Education shall adopt, by rule, specific  
7 criteria for the student reading portfolios and a definition  
8 of what constitutes mastery of all third grade state reading  
9 standards.

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

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

26           (1) Students with disabilities whose Individual  
27 Education Plan indicates that participation in the statewide

1 assessment program is not appropriate, consistent with state  
2 law.

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

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

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

19 (k) No student shall be retained twice in third  
20 grade.

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

25 (1) Documentation shall be submitted to the school  
26 principal from the teacher of the student that indicates that  
27 the promotion of the student is appropriate. Documentation

1 shall include a statement identifying which good cause  
2 exemption is requested, as well as the existing reading  
3 improvement plan or Individual Education Plan of the student,  
4 as applicable.

5 (2) The school principal shall review the  
6 recommendation with the teacher, determine if the student  
7 meets one of the good cause exemptions, and shall make his or  
8 her recommendation in writing to the local superintendent of  
9 education. The local superintendent of education, in writing,  
10 shall approve or reject the recommendation of the school  
11 principal.

12 (3) The local education agency shall assist schools  
13 under its jurisdiction in providing written notification to  
14 the parent of any student who is retained in third grade for  
15 not achieving the reading level required for promotion. Notice  
16 shall clearly state the reasons why the student is not  
17 eligible for a good cause exemption and shall include a  
18 description of the proposed interventions and supports that  
19 shall be provided to the student to remedy any identified area  
20 of reading deficiency during the retained year.

21 (4) There shall be established at each school, as  
22 applicable, an intensive acceleration for any student retained  
23 in third grade. In addition to the criteria established in  
24 subdivisions (1) to (4), inclusive, of subsection (g), the  
25 intensive acceleration shall be taught by a highly effective  
26 teacher of reading who has received training in the science of  
27 reading and multisensory language instruction, as demonstrated

1 by student reading performance data and teacher performance  
2 evaluations; shall have a reduced teacher-student ratio; and  
3 shall provide explicit and systematic reading instruction and  
4 intervention for the majority of student contact time each  
5 day.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

22           (13) By school, the number of teachers who have  
23 completed training in dyslexia awareness, multisensory  
24 strategies, and satisfy the definition of a dyslexia  
25 interventionist as defined by rule of the State Board of  
26 Education.

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

16           (1) The State Board of Education shall establish  
17      annual reading growth and proficiency targets based on the  
18      information required to be reported to the superintendent in  
19      subsection (m).

20           (2) Of the funds allocated to the Alabama Reading  
21      Initiative pursuant to subdivision (6) of subsection (a) of  
22      Section 4 for state administration, the State Superintendent  
23      of Education may allocate such sums as he or she deems  
24      appropriate to establish an Alabama Reading Initiative  
25      Incentive Program that shall distribute monetary incentives to  
26      schools based on a formula, approved by the State Board of  
27      Education, that shall factor the size and geography of the

1 school, reading growth and proficiency, and the composition of  
2 student subgroups.

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

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

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

23 (3) Subject to appropriations from the Legislature,  
24 the State Board of Education and the Alabama Commission on  
25 Higher Education shall develop and approve a dyslexia  
26 therapist endorsement incentive, which shall be available to  
27 teachers who attain the dyslexia therapist endorsement. The

1 State Board of Education, by rule, shall construct parameters  
2 for earning the dyslexia therapist endorsement incentive.

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

7 (c) The State Department of Education shall provide  
8 to public universities, on an annual basis, the information  
9 required for those institutions to comply with council for the  
10 accreditation of educator preparation standard four  
11 requirements for accreditation. The Alabama Commission on  
12 Higher Education shall convene the public university deans of  
13 education to facilitate the development of a format for the  
14 data needed for accreditation compliance, and work with the  
15 State Department of Education to establish effective and  
16 timely reporting processes.

17 (d) As a requirement of initial licensure, beginning  
18 with the 2020-2021 school year, candidates for initial  
19 elementary certification shall receive a passing score, as  
20 determined by the State Board of Education, which shall base  
21 its determination on the national score average during the  
22 preceding academic year, on the Foundations of Reading  
23 assessment for entry level teachers of reading. Beginning with  
24 the graduating class of 2021, teachers seeking an initial  
25 elementary certification who have passed the EdTPA and  
26 Foundations of Reading Assessment may no longer be required to  
27 pass the Praxis 5204 Teaching Reading assessment.

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

11 (f) The standing task force created by Section 3,  
12 state public teacher preparation programs, and regional  
13 professional development inservice centers shall work together  
14 in establishing a state continuum of teacher development for  
15 approved science of reading that will reflect levels of  
16 literacy teacher development from preservice, reading  
17 specialist, to instructional leadership. The State Department  
18 of Education and the regional inservice centers shall provide  
19 preservice and inservice elementary teachers with all of the  
20 following professional learning activities:

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

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

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

- 3                   a. Oral language development.
- 4                   b. Phonemic awareness.
- 5                   c. Phonics.
- 6                   d. Fluency.
- 7                   e. Vocabulary.
- 8                   f. Writing.
- 9                   g. Comprehension.

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

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

23                   (c) On or before June 30, 2020, the committee shall  
24 revise the 2011 Alabama Action Plan for Literacy Birth Through  
25 Grade 12 in consultation with the Campaign for Grade Level  
26 Reading group, which shall be presented to the Governor, the  
27 State Superintendent of Education, the State Board of

1 Education, and the Chairs of the House Education Policy  
2 Committee and the Senate Education Policy Committee.

3 (d) The committee shall provide recommendations to  
4 the Governor and the Chairs of the House Education Policy  
5 Committee and the Senate Education Policy Committee on  
6 implementing this act and shall provide standing oversight  
7 over the quality of professional learning and program quality.  
8 The committee shall provide recommendations to the State  
9 Superintendent of Education, the Governor, and the Chairs of  
10 the House Education Policy Committee and the Senate Education  
11 Policy Committee on adopting innovative strategies and  
12 programming to improve the effectiveness of this act.

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

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

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