STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 59th Legislature (2023)

SENATE BILL 1027

By: Jett

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to schools; defining term; prohibiting certain schools from using certain funding to promote, purchase, or utilize certain concepts; prohibiting teachers and certain other school employees from using certain curricula; providing for reporting of violation to certain district attorney; providing for certain notification of certain committee chairs; providing for notification of the State Department of Education; providing for certain financial penalty; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 11-103.2a, which relates to the Oklahoma Play to Learn Act; removing reference to certain types of instruction; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1722, which relates to the purpose for the Oklahoma School for the Blind; removing reference to certain type of instruction; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1734, which relates to the purpose for the Oklahoma School for the Deaf; removing reference to certain type of instruction; updating statutory language; providing for codification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 11-103.2b of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:
A. For the purposes of this section, “social emotional learning” means:

1. Any evidence-based or non-evidence-based programming that promotes school and/or civic engagement and/or builds an equitable learning framework that creates or uses evidence-based benchmarks, standards, surveys, activities, learning indicators, programs, policies, processes, professional development, or assessments that address non-cognitive social factors including but not limited to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making, and/or other attributes, dispositions, social skills, attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, feelings, emotions, mindsets, metacognitive learning skills, motivation, grit, self-regulation, tenacity, perseverance, resilience, and/or intrapersonal resources;

2. Any evidence-based or non-evidence-based program, policy, process, or procedure that uses school climate surveys to collect data from students according to skills that include but are not limited to education, confidence, connections, motivation, stress, and/or well-being; and

3. Any evidence-based or non-evidence-based program, policy, or procedure that compiles and/or uses data from school climate surveys to develop aligned learning opportunities.

B. No public school district, public charter school, or public virtual charter school shall use federal, state, or private funds to
promote, purchase, or utilize the concepts of social emotional learning for training, instruction, or education of students.

C. No public school district, public charter school, or public virtual charter school teacher, administrator, counselor, employee, or volunteer shall use any curricula with content related to social emotional learning in the training, instruction, or education of students. The provisions of this subsection shall apply to all learning resources.

D. 1. A parent or legal guardian of a student enrolled in a public school district, public charter school, or public virtual charter school who has reason to believe a violation of the provisions of this section has occurred shall make a report in good faith with the district attorney for the county in which the school district or charter school is located or with the district attorney for the county in which the virtual charter school student resides. The report shall include any written documentation of the potential violation including but not limited to a project or class assignment.

2. A district attorney who receives a report pursuant to the provisions of this subsection and determines that a violation of this section has occurred shall notify the chairs of the education committees in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

3. If the chairs of the education committees in the Senate and the House of Representatives determine that a violation of this
section has occurred, they shall notify the State Department of Education. The Department shall assess a financial penalty against the school district, public charter school, or public virtual charter school in an amount equal to five percent (5%) of the State Aid allocation for the district, charter school, or virtual charter school for the proceeding fiscal year.

SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 11-103.2a, is amended to read as follows:

Section 11-103.2a. A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the “Oklahoma Play to Learn Act”.

B. It is the intention of the Oklahoma State Legislature through this act the Oklahoma Play to Learn Act to focus on the importance of child-centered, play-based learning as the most rigorous and most developmentally appropriate way for children in the early childhood grade levels to learn literacy, science, technology, engineering, art, and math academic concepts.

C. As used in this section:

1. “Child-directed” means interaction in which the child is helped to direct and lead the play in any way the child wishes, unless there is harmful or destructive activity;

2. “Domain” means a specified sphere of activity or knowledge;

3. “Early childhood education” means prekindergarten, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and third grade;

4. “Play” means the spontaneous activity of children;
5. “Play-based learning” means any learning activities that are performed by a child for self-amusement that have behavioral, social and psychomotor rewards. Play-based learning shall also mean activities that are child-directed, joyful and spontaneous whereby the rewards come from within the individual child;

6. “Professional development” means any of a wide variety of specialized training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill and effectiveness;

7. “Reading for pleasure” means reading that is freely chosen or that readers freely and enthusiastically continue after it is assigned; and

8. “Socialization” means social interaction with others.

D. Instruction in support of early childhood education standards may be engaging and may foster children’s development and learning in all domains, including physical, social, emotional, cognitive and language. To the best of their ability, educators may create a learning environment that facilitates child-directed experiences based upon developmentally appropriate early childhood practices and intentional, sustained, play-based learning opportunities including, but not limited to, movement, creative expression, exploration, socialization, reading for pleasure, art, music and dramatic play. The art instruction may adhere to
prekindergarten standards for fine arts, which include dance, drama, music, and visual arts, as approved by the State Department of Education. Educators may develop physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and academic learning opportunities in all curricular domains, which may include unstructured time for the discovery of each child’s individual needs, abilities, and talents.

E. In support of play-based learning in Oklahoma public schools, school districts may provide ongoing early childhood professional development for early childhood educators and administrators, which may include existing early childhood professional development programs from the State Department of Education.

F. A school district shall not prohibit a teacher from utilizing play-based learning in early childhood education. The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules, subject to approval by the Legislature, establishing guidelines for professional development programs for early childhood educators and administrators.

SECTION 3. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1722, is amended to read as follows:

Section 1722. The purposes of the Oklahoma School for the Blind shall be to:
1. Provide academic, vocational, social/emotional, and cultural instruction as well as independent living skills and transitional needs for children who are blind or visually impaired; and

2. Serve as a statewide resource center for educational services for children who are blind or visually impaired.

SECTION 4. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1734, is amended to read as follows:

Section 1734. The purposes of the Oklahoma School for the Deaf shall be:

1. To provide academic, vocational, social/emotional, and cultural instruction as well as independent living skills and transitional needs for children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing; and

2. To serve as a statewide resource center for educational services for children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

SECTION 5. This act shall become effective July 1, 2023.

SECTION 6. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.