

1 HB23
2 162765-1
3 By Representative Drake
4 RFD: Education Policy
5 First Read: 03-MAR-15
6 PFD: 02/18/2015

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8 SYNOPSIS: Under existing law, handwriting is required
9 to be taught in public elementary school.

10 This bill would require the teaching of
11 cursive writing by the end of the third grade year.

12
13 A BILL
14 TO BE ENTITLED
15 AN ACT

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17 To amend Section 16-6B-2, Code of Alabama 1975, to
18 require that instruction in handwriting for elementary school
19 students include instruction in cursive writing by the end of
20 the third grade year.

21 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

22 Section 1. Section 16-6B-2 of the Code of Alabama
23 1975, is amended to read as follows:

24 "§16-6B-2.

25 "Every Alabama student shall be given instruction in
26 grades kindergarten through twelve to prepare him or her to
27 enter the world of work and/or to complete course work at the

1 postsecondary level. In addition to a comprehensive core
2 curriculum of academics, each local board of education shall
3 offer a program of vocational/technical education.

4 "(a) The following words and phrases used in this
5 section shall, in the absence of a clear implication
6 otherwise, be given the following respective interpretations:

7 "(1) REQUIRED COURSES. Courses which are required to
8 be taken by every student enrolled in public schools in the
9 State of Alabama.

10 "(2) ELECTIVE COURSES. Courses which are neither
11 mandatory nor required to be taken by any student enrolled in
12 public schools in the State of Alabama.

13 "(b) The Legislature finds that students must become
14 more literate in the basic skills needed to earn a living or
15 to continue their education. The Legislature further finds
16 that the English language is a common bond that holds our
17 society together. It is necessary that the State Board of
18 Education adopt curriculum policies to ensure that Alabama
19 students have a command of the spoken and written English
20 language. The Legislature further finds that in Alabama
21 schools, students earning a standard high school diploma are
22 only required to earn two credits of mathematics after they
23 enter the ninth grade prior to graduation. The Legislature
24 further finds that special attention must be given to the
25 Alabama courses of study. The State Board of Education shall
26 establish a rigorous and meaningful core curriculum including,
27 but not limited to, all of the following courses for grades

1 nine through twelve in public schools to be phased in
2 beginning with students entering ninth grade in the 1996-97
3 scholastic year:

4 "(1) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
5 English.

6 "(2) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
7 mathematics, including but not limited to material designed to
8 ensure that no high school student fails to learn basic
9 mathematical skills and computer literacy.

10 "(3) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
11 science.

12 "(4) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
13 social studies with an emphasis on history, music history,
14 fine arts history, geography, economics, and political
15 science. History courses shall include material on the history
16 of the United States and the Constitution of the United
17 States. The Legislature further requires that the curriculum
18 content of American history shall include the teaching of
19 important historical documents including the Constitution of
20 the United States, The Declaration of Independence, The
21 Emancipation Proclamation, The Federalist Papers, and other
22 such documents important to the history and heritage of the
23 United States.

24 "(c) It is the intent of the Legislature that credit
25 for required basic core academic courses may be earned in
26 conjunction with vocational courses and/or programs. It is the

1 intent of the Legislature that local boards of education offer
2 and schedule students into vocational programs.

3 "(d) It is the intent of the Legislature that, in
4 addition to the required courses, elective courses including,
5 but not limited to, foreign languages, fine arts, physical
6 education, wellness education, and vocational and technical
7 preparation be available to all students as determined by the
8 local board of education. For purposes of this section,
9 American Sign Language is a foreign language; a public school
10 may offer such a course; and a student who successfully
11 completes the course is entitled to receive credit for the
12 course toward satisfaction of a foreign language requirement,
13 pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the Alabama State
14 Board of Education. Beginning with the 2005-2006 school year,
15 the preceding sentence shall apply to hearing-impaired
16 students; and beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, and
17 each school year thereafter, the preceding sentence shall
18 apply to all students. Nothing in this chapter shall be
19 construed to diminish the current requirements of the State
20 Board of Education with respect to health and physical
21 education instruction in grades K-12 or to reduce the effect
22 of Section 16-40-1 regarding health and physical education.

23 "(e) The State Board of Education shall adopt
24 necessary policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and
25 standards to require that:

26 "(1) The required courses set forth in this section
27 shall be taken by every student enrolled in grades nine

1 through twelve of public schools to be phased in beginning
2 with students entering the ninth grade in the 1996-97
3 scholastic year. The State Superintendent of Education after a
4 hearing in which he or she determines there exists just cause
5 may grant a one-time delay of one year for a school system
6 from implementation of any one of the required courses.

7 "(2) The required courses set forth in this section
8 shall be successfully passed by a student enrolled in grades
9 nine through twelve of public schools prior to such student's
10 graduation or receipt of a diploma, phased in beginning with
11 students entering the ninth grade in the 1996-97 scholastic
12 year. Students identified as eligible for special education
13 services as provided by federal and state law shall be
14 required to meet the provisions set forth in the individual
15 education plan prescribed to meet their individual needs as
16 required by law. The State Board of Education shall continue
17 to set graduation requirements; however, such graduation
18 requirements shall not provide less in the way of requirements
19 in the areas of English, math, science, and social studies as
20 provided in this chapter.

21 "(3) In addition to the required courses, a number
22 of elective courses shall be successfully passed by a student
23 enrolled in grades nine through twelve of public schools prior
24 to such student's graduation or receipt of a diploma, phased
25 in beginning with students entering the ninth grade in the
26 1996-97 scholastic year. The State Board of Education shall

1 determine the number and classification of units of credit
2 required for high school graduation.

3 "(f) The State Board of Education, on the
4 recommendation of the State Superintendent of Education, shall
5 prescribe the minimum contents of courses of study for all
6 public elementary and high schools in the state. In every
7 elementary school there shall be taught at least reading
8 including phonics, spelling, handwriting, arithmetic, oral and
9 written English, geography, history of the United States and
10 Alabama, elementary science, hygiene and sanitation, physical
11 education, the arts, including musical and visual arts,
12 environmental protection, and such other studies as may be
13 prescribed by the local board of education. Instruction in
14 handwriting shall include cursive writing so that students are
15 able to create readable documents through legible cursive
16 handwriting by the end of the third grade. Moreover, the State
17 Board of Education shall require the following courses for
18 grades one through eight in all public schools to be phased in
19 beginning with students entering grades one through eight in
20 the 1995-96 scholastic year: English, social studies,
21 mathematics, and science shall be taught each year in grades
22 one through eight. English shall include, but not be limited
23 to, material designed to develop language arts, such as
24 reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Social
25 studies shall emphasize geography and history of the United
26 States and Alabama.

1 "(g) The State Board of Education shall adopt
2 necessary policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and/or
3 standards to require college and university departments of
4 education to review their existing educational programs for
5 all prospective teachers in order to ensure that they are
6 properly prepared to teach the courses required by law.

7 "(h) The State Board of Education and all local
8 boards shall develop and implement within ninety (90) days of
9 July 7, 1995, a comprehensive character education program for
10 all grades to consist of not less than ten minutes instruction
11 per day focusing upon the students' development of the
12 following character traits: Courage, patriotism, citizenship,
13 honesty, fairness, respect for others, kindness, cooperation,
14 self-respect, self-control, courtesy, compassion, tolerance,
15 diligence, generosity, punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness,
16 school pride, respect for the environment, patience,
17 creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty, and perseverance. Each
18 plan of instruction shall include the Pledge of Allegiance to
19 the American flag.

20 "(i) The State Board of Education shall adopt
21 necessary policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and/or
22 standards to ensure quality vocational/technical education
23 programs."

24 Section 2. This act shall become effective on the
25 first day of the third month following its passage and
26 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.