

1 HB218
2 173746-3
3 By Representatives Drake, Carns, Alexander, Grimsley, Fridy,
4 Shedd, Butler, Farley, Scott, Fincher, Wadsworth, Holmes (M),
5 Sells, Daniels, Hill (J), McCutcheon and Treadaway
6 RFD: Education Policy
7 First Read: 11-FEB-16

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ENROLLED, An Act,

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

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as Lexi's Law.

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

"§16-6B-2.

"Every Alabama student shall be given instruction in grades kindergarten through twelve to prepare him or her to enter the world of work and/or to complete course work at the postsecondary level. In addition to a comprehensive core curriculum of academics, each local board of education shall offer a program of vocational/technical education.

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

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

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

4 "(b) The Legislature finds that students must become
5 more literate in the basic skills needed to earn a living or
6 to continue their education. The Legislature further finds
7 that the English language is a common bond that holds our
8 society together. It is necessary that the State Board of
9 Education adopt curriculum policies to ensure that Alabama
10 students have a command of the spoken and written English
11 language. The Legislature further finds that in Alabama
12 schools, students earning a standard high school diploma are
13 only required to earn two credits of mathematics after they
14 enter the ninth grade prior to graduation. The Legislature
15 further finds that special attention must be given to the
16 Alabama courses of study. The State Board of Education shall
17 establish a rigorous and meaningful core curriculum including,
18 but not limited to, all of the following courses for grades
19 nine through twelve in public schools to be phased in
20 beginning with students entering ninth grade in the 1996-97
21 scholastic year:

22 "(1) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
23 English.

24 "(2) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
25 mathematics, including but not limited to material designed to

1 ensure that no high school student fails to learn basic
2 mathematical skills and computer literacy.

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

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

17 "(c) It is the intent of the Legislature that credit
18 for required basic core academic courses may be earned in
19 conjunction with vocational courses and/or programs. It is the
20 intent of the Legislature that local boards of education offer
21 and schedule students into vocational programs.

22 "(d) It is the intent of the Legislature that, in
23 addition to the required courses, elective courses including,
24 but not limited to, foreign languages, fine arts, physical
25 education, wellness education, and vocational and technical

1 preparation be available to all students as determined by the
2 local board of education. For purposes of this section,
3 American Sign Language is a foreign language; a public school
4 may offer such a course; and a student who successfully
5 completes the course is entitled to receive credit for the
6 course toward satisfaction of a foreign language requirement,
7 pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the Alabama State
8 Board of Education. Beginning with the 2005-2006 school year,
9 the preceding sentence shall apply to hearing-impaired
10 students; and beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, and
11 each school year thereafter, the preceding sentence shall
12 apply to all students. Nothing in this chapter shall be
13 construed to diminish the current requirements of the State
14 Board of Education with respect to health and physical
15 education instruction in grades K-12 or to reduce the effect
16 of Section 16-40-1 regarding health and physical education.

17 "(e) The State Board of Education shall adopt
18 necessary policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and
19 standards to require that:

20 "(1) The required courses set forth in this section
21 shall be taken by every student enrolled in grades nine
22 through twelve of public schools to be phased in beginning
23 with students entering the ninth grade in the 1996-97
24 scholastic year. The State Superintendent of Education after a
25 hearing in which he or she determines there exists just cause

1 may grant a one-time delay of one year for a school system
2 from implementation of any one of the required courses.

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

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

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

1 applicable schools in the school district are meeting the
2 cursive writing requirements under subsection (f). The State
3 Board of Education may adopt rules to implement this
4 subsection.

5 Section 3. This act shall become effective on the
6 first day of the third month following its passage and
7 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.

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Speaker of the House of Representatives

President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

House of Representatives

I hereby certify that the within Act originated in
and was passed by the House 12-APR-16, as amended.

Jeff Woodard
Clerk

Senate

04-MAY-16

Passed