

1 HB218
2 173746-1
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

2
3
4
5
6
7
8 SYNOPSIS: Under existing law, handwriting is required
9 to be taught in public elementary school.

10 This bill would establish Lexi's Law and
11 would require the teaching of cursive writing by
12 the end of the third grade year.

13
14 A BILL
15 TO BE ENTITLED
16 AN ACT

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

22 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

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

25 Section 2. Section 16-6B-2 of the Code of Alabama
26 1975, is amended to read as follows:

27 "§16-6B-2.

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

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

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

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

16 "(b) The Legislature finds that students must become
17 more literate in the basic skills needed to earn a living or
18 to continue their education. The Legislature further finds
19 that the English language is a common bond that holds our
20 society together. It is necessary that the State Board of
21 Education adopt curriculum policies to ensure that Alabama
22 students have a command of the spoken and written English
23 language. The Legislature further finds that in Alabama
24 schools, students earning a standard high school diploma are
25 only required to earn two credits of mathematics after they
26 enter the ninth grade prior to graduation. The Legislature
27 further finds that special attention must be given to the

1 Alabama courses of study. The State Board of Education shall
2 establish a rigorous and meaningful core curriculum including,
3 but not limited to, all of the following courses for grades
4 nine through twelve in public schools to be phased in
5 beginning with students entering ninth grade in the 1996-97
6 scholastic year:

7 "(1) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
8 English.

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

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

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

1 "(c) It is the intent of the Legislature that credit
2 for required basic core academic courses may be earned in
3 conjunction with vocational courses and/or programs. It is the
4 intent of the Legislature that local boards of education offer
5 and schedule students into vocational programs.

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

1 "(e) The State Board of Education shall adopt
2 necessary policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and
3 standards to require that:

4 "(1) The required courses set forth in this section
5 shall be taken by every student enrolled in grades nine
6 through twelve of public schools to be phased in beginning
7 with students entering the ninth grade in the 1996-97
8 scholastic year. The State Superintendent of Education after a
9 hearing in which he or she determines there exists just cause
10 may grant a one-time delay of one year for a school system
11 from implementation of any one of the required courses.

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

26 "(3) In addition to the required courses, a number
27 of elective courses shall be successfully passed by a student

1 enrolled in grades nine through twelve of public schools prior
2 to such student's graduation or receipt of a diploma, phased
3 in beginning with students entering the ninth grade in the
4 1996-97 scholastic year. The State Board of Education shall
5 determine the number and classification of units of credit
6 required for high school graduation.

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

1 reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Social
2 studies shall emphasize geography and history of the United
3 States and Alabama.

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

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

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

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