

2  
3 SUBSTITUTE FOR HB388

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

10                  (5) One local superintendent of education appointed  
11 by the Executive Director 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                  (8) One early childhood educator appointed by the  
18 Secretary of the Alabama Department of Early Childhood  
19 Education.

20                  (9) One dean of a college of education appointed by  
21 the Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

22                  (b) Each approved assessment system shall do all of  
23 the following:

24                   (1) Provide screening and diagnostic capabilities  
25 for monitoring student progress.

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

4           (3) Identify students who have a reading deficiency,  
5 including identifying students with characteristics of  
6 dyslexia.

7           (c) In determining which assessment systems to  
8 approve for use by local education agencies, the task force,  
9 at a minimum, shall also consider all of the following  
10 factors:

11           (1) The time required to conduct the assessments,  
12 with the intention of minimizing the impact on instructional  
13 time.

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

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

18           Section 4. (a) Funds appropriated by the Legislature  
19 in support of the Alabama Reading Initiative shall be  
20 allocated to support the following:

21           (1) Local education agencies to support local  
22 reading specialists.

23           (2) The Alabama Summer Achievement Program.

24           (3) Regional literacy specialists.

25           (4) Preservice and inservice teacher professional  
26 learning activities for elementary school teachers in reading.

27           (5) Curricula to support student interventions.

1 (6) State administration.

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

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

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

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

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

26 (c) Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy  
27 specialists shall provide support to local education agencies

1 through a gradual release model, whereby the regional reading  
2 specialist shall support a struggling school until that school  
3 has improved core instruction to the extent that it is no  
4 longer among the lowest five percent of elementary schools in  
5 reading proficiency, as determined by annual results of the  
6 state summative assessment for federal and statewide  
7 accountability.

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

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

1 year, and make instruction adjustment recommendations  
2 according to student specific need. Distance and need shall be  
3 considered by local superintendents of education when  
4 selecting the schools where a regional literacy specialist  
5 shall serve. There shall be two levels of limited literacy  
6 support provided by a regional literacy specialist. The local  
7 superintendent of education of a local education agency  
8 subject to this subdivision shall determine the level of  
9 limited support that each regional literacy specialist shall  
10 provide.

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

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

22 (3) An Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy  
23 specialist shall have all of the following minimum  
24 qualifications:

25 a. The required Alabama Professional Educator  
26 Certificate.



1           b. A bachelor's degree and advanced coursework or  
2 professional development in the science of reading,  
3 multisensory language instruction, such as Language Essentials  
4 for Teachers of Reading and Spelling, or a comparable  
5 alternative training approved by the State Board of Education.

6           c. A minimum of four years of experience as a  
7 successful elementary or literacy teacher.

8           d. A knowledge of scientifically based reading  
9 research, special expertise in quality reading instruction and  
10 intervention, dyslexia specific interventions, and data  
11 analysis.

12           e. A strong knowledge base in the science of  
13 learning to read and the science of early childhood education.

14           f. Excellent communication skills with outstanding  
15 presentation, interpersonal, and time management skills.

16           (d) An Alabama Reading Initiative local reading  
17 specialist shall be assigned to provide intensive, targeted  
18 professional development for elementary school teachers at one  
19 school.

20           (1) An Alabama Reading Initiative local reading  
21 specialist shall have all of the following minimum  
22 qualifications:

23           a. The required Alabama Professional Educator  
24 Certificate.

25           b. A bachelor's degree and advanced coursework or  
26 professional development in the science of reading, such as

1 multisensory language instruction, or comparable alternative  
2 training approved by the State Board of Education.

3 c. A minimum of two years of experience as a  
4 successful elementary or literacy teacher.

5 d. A knowledge of scientifically based reading  
6 research, special expertise in quality reading instruction and  
7 intervention, dyslexia specific interventions, and data  
8 analysis.

9 e. A strong knowledge base in the science of  
10 learning to read and the science of early childhood education.

11 f. Excellent communication skills with outstanding  
12 presentation, interpersonal, and time management skills.

13 (2) The duties and responsibilities of an Alabama  
14 Reading Initiative local reading specialist shall include all  
15 of the following:

16 a. Collaborating with the principal to create a  
17 strategic plan for coaching.

18 b. Facilitating schoolwide professional development  
19 and study groups.

20 c. Modeling effective reading instructional  
21 strategies for teachers.

22 d. Coaching and mentoring teachers daily.

23 e. Facilitating data analysis discussions and  
24 support teachers by using data to differentiate instruction  
25 according to the needs of students.

1           f. Fostering multiple areas of teacher professional  
2 learning, including exceptional student education and content  
3 area knowledge.

4           g. Prioritizing time for those teachers, activities,  
5 and roles that will have the greatest impact on student  
6 reading achievement, such as coaching and mentoring in  
7 classrooms.

8           h. Monitoring the reading progress of all students a  
9 minimum of three times per year and making recommendations for  
10 adjustment of instruction according to student specific need.

11           i. An Alabama Reading Initiative local reading  
12 specialist may not perform administrative functions such as  
13 serving as an evaluator, substitute teacher, assessment  
14 coordinator, or school administrator.

15           (e) The State Superintendent of Education and local  
16 education agencies shall monitor the implementation and  
17 effectiveness of the Alabama Reading Initiative regional  
18 literacy specialist and local reading specialist model, and  
19 the State Superintendent of Education and each local education  
20 agency being served by a regional literacy specialist or a  
21 local reading specialist shall maintain communication among  
22 the district, school administration, and the Alabama Reading  
23 Initiative state administration staff throughout the academic  
24 year.

25           (1) The State Superintendent of Education, or his or  
26 her designee, shall certify that each Alabama Reading  
27 Initiative regional literacy specialist or local reading

1 specialist satisfies the minimum qualifications provided by  
2 this act before coaches are hired with funds appropriated by  
3 the Legislature to support the Alabama Reading Initiative.

4 (2) The State Superintendent of Education shall  
5 develop an evidence-based accountability reporting system for  
6 the Alabama Reading Initiative that shall measure student  
7 growth and proficiency towards teacher professional learning  
8 goals and student performance on state approved formative and  
9 summative assessments.

10 (3) The State Superintendent of Education shall  
11 submit a report to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the  
12 Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President Pro  
13 Tempore of the Senate, and the Chairs of the House Ways and  
14 Means Education Committee, Senate Finance and Taxation  
15 Education Committee, House Education Policy Committee, and  
16 Senate Education Policy Committee, no later than December 31,  
17 annually, on the status of teacher professional learning,  
18 student growth and proficiency against grade level standards  
19 in K-3 reading.

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

25 (b) Based on the results of the reading assessment  
26 in Section 3, each K-3 student who exhibits a reading  
27 deficiency, or the characteristics of dyslexia, shall be

1 provided an appropriate reading intervention program to  
2 address his or her specific deficiencies. The State  
3 Superintendent of Education shall provide a list of vetted and  
4 approved comprehensive reading and intervention programs with  
5 the advice of the task force established under subsection (a)  
6 of Section 3. The intervention program shall be provided in  
7 addition to the comprehensive core reading instruction that is  
8 provided to all students in the general education classroom.  
9 Dyslexia specific intervention, as defined by rule of the  
10 State Board of Education, shall be provided to students who  
11 have the characteristics of dyslexia and all struggling  
12 readers. The reading intervention program shall do all of the  
13 following:

14 (1) Provide explicit, direct instruction that is  
15 systematic, sequential, and cumulative in language  
16 development, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency,  
17 vocabulary, and comprehension, as applicable.

18 (2) Provide daily targeted small group reading  
19 interventions based on student need in phonological awareness,  
20 phonics including decoding and encoding, sight words,  
21 vocabulary, or comprehension.

22 (3) Be implemented during regular school hours.

23 (c) The parent or legal guardian of any K-3 student  
24 who exhibits a consistent deficiency in letter naming fluency,  
25 letter sound fluency, nonsense word reading, sight words, oral  
26 reading accuracy, vocabulary, or comprehension at any time  
27 during the school year shall be notified in writing no later

1 than 15 school days after the identification. The written  
2 notification shall include all of the following:

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

8 (2) A description of the current services that are  
9 provided to the student.

10 (3) A description of the proposed evidence-based  
11 reading interventions and supplemental instructional services  
12 and supports that shall be proposed for discussion while  
13 establishing the student's reading improvement plan as  
14 provided in subsection (d).

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

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

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

25 (7) A statement that while the statewide reading  
26 assessment is the initial determinant for promotion, the  
27 assessment is not the sole determiner at the end of third

1 grade. Additionally, students shall be provided with a  
2 test-based student portfolio option and an alternative reading  
3 assessment option to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for  
4 promotion to fourth grade.

5 (d) Any K-3 student who exhibits a reading  
6 deficiency at any time, as provided in subsection (b), shall  
7 receive an individual reading improvement plan no later than  
8 30 days after the identification of the reading deficiency.

9 (1) The reading improvement plan shall be created by  
10 the teacher, principal, other pertinent school personnel, and  
11 the parent or legal guardian of the student, and shall  
12 describe the evidence-based reading intervention services,  
13 including dyslexia specific intervention services, that the  
14 student shall receive to improve the reading deficit.

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

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

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

4           (1) Summer reading camps shall be staffed with  
5 highly effective teachers of reading as demonstrated by  
6 student reading performance data, completion of multisensory  
7 structured language education, and teacher performance  
8 evaluations.

9           (2) The highly effective teacher of reading shall  
10 provide direct, explicit, and systematic reading intervention  
11 services and supports to improve any identified area of  
12 reading deficiency.

13           (3) Summer reading camps, at a minimum, shall  
14 include 70 hours of time in scientifically based reading  
15 instruction and intervention.

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

19           (5) Summer reading camps may be held in conjunction  
20 with existing summer programs in the school district or in  
21 partnership with community-based summer programs, designated  
22 as effective by the State Superintendent of Education and the  
23 task force established under subsection (a) of Section 3.

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



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

4           (2) Funds allocated to the program in excess of the  
5 amount needed to fully fund summer programs in public  
6 elementary schools that are among the lowest five percent  
7 performing schools shall be divided, based on a per pupil  
8 allocation, and distributed by the State Superintendent of  
9 Education, to support high quality summer camps at elementary  
10 schools that are not among the lowest five percent performing  
11 elementary schools. The State Superintendent of Education  
12 shall award the funds to each local education agency based on  
13 the number of students who scored deficient, as determined by  
14 the task force established under subsection (a) of Section 3,  
15 on a state approved reading assessment used to determine  
16 reading proficiency during the administration of the  
17 assessment during the preceding academic year.

18           (3) The State Superintendent of Education shall  
19 provide guidelines for the administration of the Alabama  
20 Summer Achievement Program, and shall oversee all of the  
21 following:

22           a. The administration of the Alabama Summer  
23 Achievement Program in the lowest five percent performing  
24 elementary schools.

25           b. The response to instruction process in the lowest  
26 five percent performing elementary schools.

1           c. The Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy  
2 specialists and local reading specialists.

3           d. All other aspects of implementation of this act  
4 including, but not limited to, collaboration among State  
5 Department of Education staff and the task force established  
6 under subsection (a) of Section 3 to improve the reading  
7 proficiency of public K-3 students and implementation of rules  
8 adopted by the State Board of Education.

9           e. The implementation of rules adopted by the State  
10 Board of Education pertaining to dyslexia.

11           f. Collaboration with the Alabama Reading Initiative  
12 state staff and the Alabama Department of Early Childhood  
13 Education for appropriate professional learning approved by  
14 the State Department of Education.

15           g. The development of guidelines for identifying the  
16 characteristics of dyslexia.

17           (g) Any incoming third grade student identified with  
18 a reading deficiency shall be provided more intensified  
19 reading interventions to improve his or her specific reading  
20 deficiency. Reading intervention services shall include  
21 effective instructional strategies to accelerate student  
22 progress. Each local education agency shall conduct a review  
23 of student reading improvement plans for all incoming third  
24 grade students identified with a reading deficiency. The  
25 review shall address additional supports and services, as  
26 described in this section, necessary to improve any identified  
27 area of reading deficiency. The local education agency shall

1 provide all of the following services for third grade students  
2 identified with a reading deficiency, and those services may  
3 be funded with funds received through the allocation provided  
4 in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of Section 4:

5 (1) An effective or highly effective teacher of  
6 reading as demonstrated by student reading performance data  
7 and teacher performance evaluations.

8 (2) Reading intervention services and supports to  
9 improve any identified area of reading deficiency including,  
10 but not limited to, all of the following:

11 a. Additional instructional time devoted to  
12 scientifically based and evidence based reading instruction  
13 and intervention.

14 b. The use of evidence based reading strategies or  
15 programs, or both, that have been vetted and approved by the  
16 State Superintendent of Education and the task force  
17 established under subsection (a) of Section 3, that have  
18 demonstrated proven results in accelerating student reading  
19 achievement within the same school year.

20 c. Daily targeted small group reading intervention  
21 based on student need.

22 d. Explicit and systematic instruction with more  
23 detailed explanations, more extensive opportunities for guided  
24 practice, and more opportunities for error correction and  
25 feedback.

1 e. Frequent monitoring of the progress of the  
2 reading skills of each student throughout the school year and  
3 adjusting instruction according to student need.

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

7 (4) A read at home plan, including participation in  
8 parent training workshops or regular parent guided home  
9 reading activities.

10 (h) Commencing with the 2021-2022 school year, third  
11 grade students shall demonstrate sufficient reading skills for  
12 promotion to fourth grade. Students shall be provided all of  
13 the following options to demonstrate sufficient reading skills  
14 for promotion to fourth grade, and the State Superintendent of  
15 Education shall provide guidelines for the implementation of  
16 this subsection:

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

20 (2) Earning an acceptable score on an alternative  
21 standardized reading assessment as determined and approved by  
22 the State Superintendent of Education.

23 (3) Demonstrating mastery of all third grade state  
24 reading standards as evidenced by a student reading portfolio.  
25 The State Superintendent of Education and the task force  
26 established under subsection (a) of Section 3 shall establish  
27 criteria for the student reading portfolios and a definition

1 of what constitutes mastery of all third grade state reading  
2 standards.

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

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

19 (1) Students with disabilities whose Individual  
20 Education Plan indicates that participation in the statewide  
21 assessment program is not appropriate, consistent with state  
22 law.

23 (2) Students identified as English language learners  
24 who have had less than two years of instruction in English as  
25 a second language.

26 (3) Students with disabilities who participate in  
27 the statewide English language arts reading assessment and who

1 have an Individual Education Plan or a Section 504 plan that  
2 reflects that the student has received intensive reading  
3 intervention for more than two years and who still  
4 demonstrates a deficiency in reading and was previously  
5 retained in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third  
6 grade.

7 (4) Students who have received intensive reading  
8 intervention for two or more years and who still demonstrate a  
9 deficiency in reading and who were previously retained in  
10 kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade for a  
11 total of two years.

12 (k) No student shall be retained more than twice in  
13 kindergarten through third grade.

14 (1) A request to exempt a student from the mandatory  
15 retention requirement using one of the good cause exemptions  
16 listed in subsection (j) shall be made consistent with the  
17 following:

18 (1) Documentation shall be submitted to the school  
19 principal from the teacher of the student that indicates that  
20 the promotion of the student is appropriate. Documentation  
21 shall include a statement identifying which good cause  
22 exemption is requested, as well as the existing reading  
23 improvement plan or Individual Education Plan of the student,  
24 as applicable.

25 (2) The school principal shall review the  
26 recommendation of the teacher, determine if the student meets  
27 one of the good cause exemptions, and shall make his or her

1 determination in writing to the local superintendent of  
2 education. The local superintendent of education, in writing,  
3 shall approve or reject the recommendation of the school  
4 principal.

5 (3) The local education agency shall assist schools  
6 under its jurisdiction in providing written notification to  
7 the parent of any student who is retained in third grade for  
8 not achieving the reading level required for promotion. Notice  
9 shall clearly state the reasons why the student is not  
10 eligible for a good cause exemption and shall include a  
11 description of the proposed interventions and supports that  
12 shall be provided to the student to improve any identified  
13 area of reading deficiency during the retained year.

14 (4) There shall be established at each school, as  
15 applicable, an intensive acceleration for any student retained  
16 in third grade. In addition to the criteria established in  
17 subdivisions (1) to (4), inclusive, of subsection (g), the  
18 intensive acceleration shall be taught by a highly effective  
19 teacher of reading who has received training in the science of  
20 reading and multisensory language instruction, as demonstrated  
21 by student reading performance data and teacher performance  
22 evaluations; shall have a reduced teacher-student ratio; and  
23 shall provide explicit and systematic reading instruction and  
24 intervention for the majority of student contact time each  
25 day.

26 (m) Annually, on or before September 30, each local  
27 education agency shall report in writing to the State

1 Superintendent of Education the following information on the  
2 previous school year:

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

6 (2) By grade, the number and percentage of students  
7 screened for dyslexia characteristics, the number and  
8 percentage of students identified as demonstrating the  
9 characteristics of dyslexia and receiving dyslexia specific  
10 intervention, and the name of the dyslexia specific  
11 intervention being provided.

12 (3) By grade, the number and percentage of all K-3  
13 students performing on grade level or above on a State Board  
14 of Education approved reading assessment.

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

18 (5) The total number and percentage of third grade  
19 students who started third grade with a reading deficiency but  
20 completed third grade on grade level as determined by the  
21 third grade state standardized assessment in reading.

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

25 (7) By grade, pre and post Alabama Summer  
26 Achievement Program reading assessment scores and other  
27 mandatory summer camp data.



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

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

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

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

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

16           (13) By school, the number of teachers who have  
17 completed training in dyslexia awareness, multisensory  
18 strategies, and satisfy the definition of a dyslexia  
19 interventionist as defined by rule of the State Board of  
20 Education.

21           (n) The State Superintendent of Education shall  
22 establish a uniform format for local school systems to use in  
23 reporting the information required by subsection (m). The  
24 format shall be developed with input from local education  
25 agencies and shall be provided to each local education agency  
26 no later than 90 days before the annual due date. Annually, on  
27 or before December 1, the State Superintendent of Education

1 shall compile the information received from the local  
2 education agencies into state level summary information and  
3 report the information to the State Board of Education, the  
4 public, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the President  
5 Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of  
6 Representatives, and the Chairs of the House Ways and Means  
7 Education Committee and Senate Finance and Taxation Education  
8 Committee.

9 (1) The State Superintendent of Education and the  
10 task force established under subsection (a) of Section 3 shall  
11 establish annual reading growth and proficiency targets based  
12 on the information required to be reported to the  
13 superintendent in subsection (m).

14 (2) Of the funds allocated to the Alabama Reading  
15 Initiative pursuant to subdivision (6) of subsection (a) of  
16 Section 4 for state administration, the State Superintendent  
17 of Education may allocate such sums as he or she deems  
18 appropriate to establish an Alabama Reading Initiative  
19 Incentive Program that shall distribute monetary incentives to  
20 schools based on a formula, approved by the State  
21 Superintendent of Education with the Alabama Committee on  
22 Grade Level Reading created in Section 7, that shall factor  
23 the size and geography of the school, reading growth and  
24 proficiency, and the composition of student subgroups.

25 Section 6. (a) The State Superintendent of Education  
26 shall develop, and the State Board of Education shall approve,

1 a dyslexia therapist certification endorsement on or before  
2 December 31, 2019.

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

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

19 (3) Subject to appropriations from the Legislature,  
20 the State Superintendent of Education and the Alabama  
21 Commission on Higher Education shall develop and approve a  
22 dyslexia therapist endorsement incentive, which shall be  
23 available to teachers who attain the dyslexia therapist  
24 endorsement, with direct student contact. The State  
25 Superintendent of Education shall construct parameters for  
26 earning the dyslexia therapist endorsement incentive.

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

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

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

26 (e) Beginning with the 2020-2021 academic year,  
27 public teacher preparation programs leading to the attainment

1 of an initial elementary teaching certification shall require  
2 no less than nine credit hours of reading or literacy  
3 coursework, or both, based on the science of learning to read,  
4 including multisensory strategies in foundation reading  
5 skills. The nine credit hours of reading or literacy  
6 coursework shall be incorporated within the current credit  
7 hours currently approved for the degree program and not  
8 require additional credit hours for graduation.

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

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

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

25 (3) Curricula and resources in all of the following  
26 reading content areas:

27 a. Oral language development.

1           b. Phonemic awareness.

2           c. Phonics.

3           d. Fluency.

4           e. Vocabulary.

5           f. Writing.

6           g. Comprehension.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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