

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 54th Legislature (2014)

3 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
4 FOR ENGROSSED  
5 HOUSE BILL 2625

6 By: Henke, Roberts (Dustin),  
7 Biggs, Smalley, Casey,  
8 Nollan, Cannaday, Scott,  
9 Condit, Echols, Bennett,  
10 Shelton, McCall, Hoskin,  
11 Cockroft, Sherrer, Pittman,  
12 Virgin and Ownbey of the  
13 House

14 and

15 Stanislawski, Griffin and  
16 Brinkley of the Senate

17 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

18 An Act relating to schools; amending 70 O.S. 2011,  
19 Section 1210.508C, as last amended by Section 96,  
20 Chapter 15, O.S.L. 2013 (70 O.S. Supp. 2013, Section  
21 1210.508C), which relates to the Reading Sufficiency  
22 Act; changing obsolete language; modifying mandatory  
23 third-grade retention requirements; requiring  
24 unanimous recommendation of certain team of persons  
and approval by the school district superintendent to  
promote a student; requiring certain reading  
instruction for students promoted; limiting  
application to certain school years; requiring  
certain information to be reported to the State  
Department of Education; requiring the Department to  
make certain report; modifying process for  
determining a good cause exemption; deleting term  
mandatory; and declaring an emergency.

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

1 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 1210.508C,  
2 as last amended by Section 96, Chapter 15, O.S.L. 2013 (70 O.S.  
3 Supp. 2013, Section 1210.508C), is amended to read as follows:

4 Section 1210.508C A. 1. Each student enrolled in kindergarten  
5 in a public school in this state shall be screened for reading  
6 skills including, but not limited to, phonological awareness, letter  
7 recognition, and oral language skills as identified in the ~~Priority~~  
8 ~~Academic Student Skills (PASS)~~ state curriculum standards adopted by  
9 the State Board of Education. A screening instrument approved by  
10 the State Board shall be utilized for the purposes of this section.

11 2. For those kindergarten children at risk for reading  
12 difficulties, teachers shall emphasize reading skills as identified  
13 in the ~~PASS~~ state curriculum standards, monitor progress throughout  
14 the year and measure year-end reading progress.

15 3. Classroom assistants, which may include parents,  
16 grandparents, or other volunteers, shall be provided in kindergarten  
17 classes to assist with the screening of students if a teacher aide  
18 is not already employed to assist in a kindergarten classroom.

19 B. 1. Each student enrolled in kindergarten, first, second and  
20 third grade of the public schools of this state shall be assessed at  
21 the beginning of each school year using a screening instrument  
22 approved by the State Board of Education for the acquisition of  
23 reading skills including, but not limited to, phonological  
24

1 awareness, phonics, spelling, reading fluency, vocabulary, and  
2 comprehension.

3       2. Any student who is assessed and found not to be reading at  
4 the appropriate grade level shall be provided a program of reading  
5 instruction designed to enable the student to acquire the  
6 appropriate grade level reading skills. Beginning with students  
7 entering the first grade in the 2011-2012 school year, the program  
8 of reading instruction shall include provisions of the READ  
9 Initiative adopted by the school district as provided for in  
10 subsection O of this section.

11       3. Throughout the year progress monitoring shall continue, and  
12 diagnostic assessment, if determined appropriate, shall be provided.  
13 Year-end reading skills shall be measured to determine reading  
14 success.

15       C. The State Board of Education shall approve screening  
16 instruments for use at the beginning of the school year, for  
17 monitoring of progress, and for measurement of reading skills at the  
18 end of the school year as required in subsections A and B of this  
19 section; provided, at least one of the screening instruments shall  
20 meet the following criteria:

- 21       1. Assess for phonological awareness, phonics, reading fluency,  
22 and comprehension;
- 23       2. Document the validity and reliability of each assessment;
- 24       3. Can be used for diagnosis and progress monitoring;

1 4. Can be used to assess special education and limited-English-  
2 proficient students;

3 5. Accompanied by a data management system that provides  
4 profiles for students, class, grade level and school building. The  
5 profiles shall identify each student's instructional point of need  
6 and reading achievement level. The State Board shall also determine  
7 other comparable reading assessments for diagnostic purposes and for  
8 periodic and post assessments to be used for students at risk of  
9 reading failure. The State Board shall ensure that any assessments  
10 approved are in alignment with the ~~PASS~~ state curriculum standards.

11 D. The program of reading instruction required in subsection B  
12 of this section shall align with the ~~PASS~~ state curriculum  
13 standards, shall include provisions of the READ Initiative adopted  
14 by the school district as provided for in subsection O of this  
15 section beginning with students entering the first grade in the  
16 2011-2012 school year and may include, but is not limited to:

17 1. Sufficient additional in-school instructional time for the  
18 acquisition of phonological awareness, phonics, spelling, reading  
19 fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension;

20 2. If necessary, tutorial instruction after regular school  
21 hours, on Saturdays and during summer; however, such instruction may  
22 not be counted toward the one-hundred-eighty-day or one-thousand-  
23 eighty-hour school year required in Section 1-109 of this title; and

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1           3. Assessments identified for diagnostic purposes and periodic  
2 monitoring to measure the acquisition of reading skills including,  
3 but not limited to, phonological awareness, phonics, spelling,  
4 reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as identified in the  
5 student's program of reading instruction.

6           E. The program of reading instruction shall continue until the  
7 student is determined by the results of approved reading assessments  
8 to be reading on grade level.

9           F. 1. Every school district shall adopt, and implement a  
10 district reading sufficiency plan which has had input from school  
11 administrators, teachers, and parents and if possible a reading  
12 specialist, and which shall be submitted electronically to and  
13 approved by the State Board of Education. The plan shall be updated  
14 annually. School districts shall not be required to electronically  
15 submit the annual updates to the Board if the last plan submitted to  
16 the Board was approved and expenditures for the program include only  
17 expenses relating to individual and small group tutoring, purchase  
18 of and training in the use of screening and assessment measures,  
19 summer school programs and Saturday school programs. If any  
20 expenditure for the program is deleted or changed or any other type  
21 of expenditure for the program is implemented, the school district  
22 shall be required to submit the latest annual update to the Board  
23 for approval. The district reading sufficiency plan shall include a  
24 plan for each site which includes an analysis of the data provided

1 by the Oklahoma School Testing Program and other reading assessments  
2 utilized as required in this section, and which outlines how each  
3 school site will comply with the provisions of the Reading  
4 Sufficiency Act.

5 2. Each school site shall establish a committee, composed of  
6 educators, which if possible shall include a certified reading  
7 specialist, to develop the required programs of reading instruction.  
8 A parent or guardian of the student shall be included in the  
9 development of the program of reading instruction for that student.

10 3. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules for the  
11 implementation and evaluation of the provisions of the Reading  
12 Sufficiency Act. The evaluation shall include, but not be limited  
13 to, an analysis of the data required in subsection S of this  
14 section.

15 G. For any third-grade student found not to be reading at grade  
16 level as determined by reading assessments administered pursuant to  
17 this section, a new program of reading instruction, including  
18 provisions of the READ Initiative adopted by the school district as  
19 provided for in subsection O of this section, shall be developed and  
20 implemented as specified in this section. If possible, a fourth-  
21 grade teacher shall be involved in the development of the program of  
22 reading instruction. In addition to other requirements of the  
23 Reading Sufficiency Act, the plan may include specialized tutoring.

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1 H. ~~Beginning~~ 1. Except as otherwise provided, beginning with  
2 students entering the first grade in the 2011-2012 school year, if  
3 the reading deficiency of a student, as identified based on  
4 assessments administered as provided for in subsection B of this  
5 section, is not remedied by the end of third grade, as demonstrated  
6 by scoring at the unsatisfactory level on the reading portion of the  
7 statewide third-grade criterion-referenced test, the student shall  
8 be retained in the third grade unless a team composed of a parent or  
9 guardian of the student, the student's third grade teacher, a fourth  
10 grade teacher assigned to the school, the school principal and a  
11 certified reading specialist unanimously recommends to the school  
12 district superintendent that the student should be promoted and the  
13 superintendent approves that recommendation. The student shall be  
14 promoted to the fourth grade if the team members unanimously  
15 recommend promotion to the school district superintendent and the  
16 superintendent approves the recommendation that promotion is the  
17 best option for the student. If the team members unanimously  
18 recommend promotion to the school district superintendent and the  
19 superintendent approves the recommendation to promote the student to  
20 the fourth grade, the student shall be provided intensive reading  
21 instruction as set forth in subsection L of this section. The  
22 provisions providing for a team to recommend promotion to the fourth  
23 grade shall only apply to the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years.  
24

1        2. The number of students promoted to the fourth grade pursuant  
2 to the unanimous recommendation of a team and the approval of the  
3 school district superintendent shall be reported to the State  
4 Department of Education following the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school  
5 years. The State Department of Education shall report the number of  
6 students promoted pursuant to these provisions to the Governor, the  
7 President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of  
8 Representatives, the chair of the Senate Education Committee and the  
9 chair of the House Common Education Committee.

10        I. The parent of any student who is found to have a reading  
11 deficiency and is not reading at the appropriate grade level and has  
12 been provided a program of reading instruction as provided for in  
13 subsection B of this section shall be notified in writing of the  
14 following:

15        1. That the student has been identified as having a substantial  
16 deficiency in reading;

17        2. A description of the current services that are provided to  
18 the student;

19        3. A description of the proposed supplemental instructional  
20 services and supports that will be provided to the student that are  
21 designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency;

22        4. That the student will not be promoted to the fourth grade if  
23 the reading deficiency is not remediated by the end of the third  
24 grade, unless the student is otherwise promoted as provided for in

1 subsection H of this section or is exempt for good cause as set  
2 forth in subsection K of this section;

3 5. Strategies for parents to use in helping their child succeed  
4 in reading proficiency;

5 6. That while the results of the statewide criterion-referenced  
6 tests administered pursuant to Section 1210.508 of this title are  
7 the initial determinant, it is not the sole determiner of promotion  
8 and that portfolio reviews and assessments are available; and

9 7. The specific criteria and policies of the school district  
10 for midyear promotion implemented as provided for in paragraph 4 of  
11 subsection N of this section.

12 J. No student may be assigned to a grade level based solely on  
13 age or other factors that constitute social promotion.

14 K. For those students who do not meet the academic requirements  
15 for promotion and who are not otherwise promoted as provided for in  
16 subsection H of this section, a school district may promote the  
17 student for good cause only. Good-cause exemptions for promotion  
18 shall be limited to the following:

19 1. Limited-English-proficient students who have had less than  
20 two (2) years of instruction in an English language learner program;

21 2. Students with disabilities whose individualized education  
22 program (IEP), consistent with state law, indicates that the student  
23 is to be assessed with alternate achievement standards through the  
24 Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program (OAAP);

1           3. Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of performance  
2 on an alternative standardized reading assessment approved by the  
3 State Board of Education;

4           4. Students who demonstrate, through a student portfolio, that  
5 the student is reading on grade level as evidenced by demonstration  
6 of mastery of the state standards beyond the retention level;

7           5. Students with disabilities who participate in the statewide  
8 criterion-referenced tests and who have an individualized education  
9 program that reflects that the student has received intensive  
10 remediation in reading for more than two (2) years but still  
11 demonstrates a deficiency in reading and was previously retained in  
12 kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade; and

13           6. Students who have received intensive remediation in reading  
14 through a program of reading instruction for two (2) or more years  
15 but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who were  
16 previously retained in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or  
17 third grade for a total of two (2) years.

18           L. A student who is otherwise promoted as provided for in  
19 subsection H of this section or is promoted for good cause as  
20 provided for in subsection K of this section shall be provided  
21 intensive reading instruction during an altered instructional day  
22 that includes specialized diagnostic information and specific  
23 reading strategies for each student. The school district shall  
24 assist schools and teachers to implement reading strategies for the

1 promoted students that research has shown to be successful in  
2 improving reading among low-performing readers.

3 M. Requests to exempt students from the ~~mandatory~~ retention  
4 requirements based on one of the good-cause exemptions as described  
5 in subsection K of this section shall be made using the following  
6 process:

7 1. Documentation submitted from the teacher of the student to  
8 the school principal that indicates the student meets one of the  
9 good-cause exemptions and promotion of the student is appropriate.  
10 In order to minimize paperwork requirements, the documentation shall  
11 consist only of the alternative assessment results or student  
12 portfolio work and the individual education plan (IEP), as  
13 applicable;

14 2. The principal of the school shall review and discuss the  
15 documentation with the teacher and the other members of the team as  
16 described in subsection H of this section. If the ~~principal~~ team  
17 determines that the student meets one of the good-cause exemptions  
18 and should be promoted based on the documentation provided, the  
19 principal shall make a recommendation in writing to the school  
20 district superintendent; and

21 3. After review, the school district superintendent shall  
22 accept or reject the recommendation of the principal in writing.

23 N. Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, each school  
24 district shall:

1           1. Conduct a review of the program of reading instruction for  
2 all students who score at the unsatisfactory level on the reading  
3 portion of the statewide criterion-referenced test administered  
4 pursuant to Section 1210.508 of this title and did not meet the  
5 criteria for one of the good-cause exemptions as set forth in  
6 subsection K of this section. The review shall address additional  
7 supports and services, as described in this subsection, needed to  
8 remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency. The school  
9 district shall require a student portfolio to be completed for each  
10 retained student;

11           2. Provide to students who have been retained as set forth in  
12 subsection H of this section with intensive interventions in  
13 reading, intensive instructional services and supports to remediate  
14 the identified areas of reading deficiency, including a minimum of  
15 ninety (90) minutes of daily, uninterrupted, scientific-research-  
16 based reading instruction. Retained students shall be provided  
17 other strategies prescribed by the school district, which may  
18 include, but are not limited to:

- 19           a. small group instruction,
- 20           b. reduced teacher-student ratios,
- 21           c. more frequent progress monitoring,
- 22           d. tutoring or mentoring,
- 23           e. transition classes containing third- and fourth-grade  
24           students,

- f. extended school day, week, or year, and
- g. summer reading academies as provided for in Section 1210.508E of this title, if available;

3. Provide written notification to the parent or guardian of any student who is to be retained as set forth in subsection H of this section that the student has not met the proficiency level required for promotion and was not otherwise promoted and the reasons the student is not eligible for a good-cause exemption. The notification shall include a description of proposed interventions and intensive instructional supports that will be provided to the student to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency;

4. Implement a policy for the midyear promotion of a retained student who can demonstrate that the student is a successful and independent reader, is reading at or above grade level, and is ready to be promoted to the fourth grade. Tools that school districts may use in reevaluating any retained student may include subsequent assessments, alternative assessments, and portfolio reviews, in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education. Retained students may only be promoted midyear prior to November 1 and only upon demonstrating a level of proficiency required to score above the unsatisfactory level on the statewide third-grade criterion-referenced test and upon showing progress sufficient to master appropriate fourth-grade-level skills, as determined by the school.

1 A midyear promotion shall be made only upon agreement of the parent  
2 or guardian of the student and the school principal;

3 5. Provide students who are retained with a high-performing  
4 teacher who can address the needs of the student, based on student  
5 performance data and above-satisfactory performance appraisals; and

6 6. In addition to required reading enhancement and acceleration  
7 strategies, provide students who are retained with at least one of  
8 the following instructional options:

9 a. supplemental tutoring in scientific-research-based  
10 reading services in addition to the regular reading  
11 block, including tutoring before or after school,

12 b. a parent-guided "Read at Home" assistance plan, as  
13 developed by the State Department of Education, the  
14 purpose of which is to encourage regular parent-guided  
15 home reading, or

16 c. a mentor or tutor with specialized reading training.

17 O. Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, each school  
18 district shall establish a Reading Enhancement and Acceleration  
19 Development (READ) Initiative. The focus of the READ Initiative  
20 shall be to prevent the retention of third-grade students by  
21 offering intensive accelerated reading instruction to third-grade  
22 students who failed to meet standards for promotion to fourth grade  
23 and to kindergarten through third-grade students who are exhibiting  
24 a reading deficiency. The READ Initiative shall:

1 1. Be provided to all kindergarten through third-grade students  
2 at risk of retention as identified by the assessments administered  
3 pursuant to the Reading Sufficiency Act. The assessment used shall  
4 measure phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and  
5 comprehension;

6 2. Be provided during regular school hours in addition to the  
7 regular reading instruction; and

8 3. Provide a state-approved reading curriculum that, at a  
9 minimum, meets the following specifications:

- 10 a. assists students assessed as exhibiting a reading  
11 deficiency in developing the ability to read at grade  
12 level,
- 13 b. provides skill development in phonemic awareness,  
14 phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension,
- 15 c. provides a scientific-research-based and reliable  
16 assessment,
- 17 d. provides initial and ongoing analysis of the reading  
18 progress of each student,
- 19 e. is implemented during regular school hours,
- 20 f. provides a curriculum in core academic subjects to  
21 assist the student in maintaining or meeting  
22 proficiency levels for the appropriate grade in all  
23 academic subjects,

1 g. establishes at each school, where applicable, an  
2 Intensive Acceleration Class for retained third-grade  
3 students who subsequently score at the unsatisfactory  
4 level on the reading portion of the statewide  
5 criterion-referenced tests. The focus of the  
6 Intensive Acceleration Class shall be to increase the  
7 reading level of a child at least two grade levels in  
8 one (1) school year. The Intensive Acceleration Class  
9 shall:

10 (1) be provided to any student in the third grade who  
11 scores at the unsatisfactory level on the reading  
12 portion of the statewide criterion-referenced  
13 tests and who was retained in the third grade the  
14 prior year because of scoring at the  
15 unsatisfactory level on the reading portion of  
16 the statewide criterion-referenced tests,

17 (2) have a reduced teacher-student ratio,

18 (3) provide uninterrupted reading instruction for the  
19 majority of student contact time each day and  
20 incorporate opportunities to master the fourth-  
21 grade state standards in other core subject  
22 areas,

23 (4) use a reading program that is scientific-  
24 research-based and has proven results in

1 accelerating student reading achievement within  
2 the same school year,

3 (5) provide intensive language and vocabulary  
4 instruction using a scientific-research-based  
5 program, including use of a speech-language  
6 therapist,

7 (6) include weekly progress monitoring measures to  
8 ensure progress is being made, and

9 (7) provide reports to the State Department of  
10 Education, in the manner described by the  
11 Department, outlining the progress of students in  
12 the class at the end of the first semester,

13 h. provide reports to the State Board of Education, upon  
14 request, on the specific intensive reading  
15 interventions and supports implemented by the school  
16 district. The State Superintendent of Public  
17 Instruction shall annually prescribe the required  
18 components of the reports, and

19 i. provide to a student who has been retained in the  
20 third grade and has received intensive instructional  
21 services but is still not ready for grade promotion,  
22 as determined by the school district, the option of  
23 being placed in a transitional instructional setting.  
24 A transitional setting shall specifically be designed

1 to produce learning gains sufficient to meet fourth-  
2 grade performance standards while continuing to  
3 remediate the areas of reading deficiency.

4 P. In addition to the requirements set forth in this section,  
5 each school district board of education shall annually report to the  
6 parent or guardian of each student in the district the progress of  
7 the student toward achieving state and district expectations for  
8 proficiency in reading, writing, science, and mathematics. The  
9 school district board of education shall report to the parent or  
10 guardian of each student the results on statewide criterion-  
11 referenced tests. The evaluation of the progress of each student  
12 shall be based upon classroom work, observations, tests, district  
13 and state assessments, and other relevant information. Progress  
14 reporting shall be provided to the parent or guardian in writing.

15 Q. 1. Each school district board of education shall annually  
16 publish on the school website, and report in writing to the State  
17 Board of Education by September 1 of each year, the following  
18 information on the prior school year:

- 19 a. the provisions of this section relating to public  
20 school student progression and the policies and  
21 procedures of the school district on student retention  
22 and promotion,
- 23 b. by grade, the number and percentage of all students in  
24 grades three through ten performing at the

1           unsatisfactory level on the reading portion of the  
2           statewide criterion-referenced tests,

3           c.    by grade, the number and percentage of all students  
4           retained in grades three through ten,

5           d.    information on the total number and percentage of  
6           students who were promoted for good cause, by each  
7           category of good cause as specified above, and

8           e.    any revisions to the policies of the school district  
9           on student retention and promotion from the prior  
10          year.

11          2.    The State Department of Education shall establish a uniform  
12          format for school districts to report the information required in  
13          this subsection. The format shall be developed with input from  
14          school districts and shall be provided not later than ninety (90)  
15          days prior to the annual due date. The Department shall annually  
16          compile the information required along with state-level summary  
17          information, and report the information to the public, the Governor,  
18          the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the  
19          House of Representatives.

20          R.    The State Department of Education shall provide technical  
21          assistance as needed to aid school districts in administering the  
22          provision of the Reading Sufficiency Act.

23          S.    On or before December 1 of each year, the State Department  
24          of Education shall issue to the Governor and members of the Senate

1 and House of Representatives Education Committees a Reading Report  
2 Card for the state and each school district and elementary site  
3 which shall include, but is not limited to, trend data detailing  
4 three (3) years of data, disaggregated by student subgroups to  
5 include economically disadvantaged, major racial or ethnic groups,  
6 students with disabilities, and English language learners, as  
7 appropriate for the following:

8 1. The number and percentage of students in kindergarten  
9 through third grade determined to be at risk for reading  
10 difficulties compared to the total number of students enrolled in  
11 each grade;

12 2. The number and percentage of students in kindergarten who  
13 continue to be at risk for reading difficulties as determined by the  
14 year-end measurement of reading progress;

15 3. The number and percentage of students in kindergarten  
16 through third grade who have successfully completed their program of  
17 reading instruction and are reading on grade level as determined by  
18 the results of approved reading assessments;

19 4. The number and percentage of students scoring at each  
20 performance level on the reading portion of the statewide third-  
21 grade criterion-referenced test;

22 5. The amount of funds for reading remediation received by each  
23 district;

24

1       6. An evaluation and narrative interpretation of the report  
2 data analyzing the impact of the Reading Sufficiency Act on  
3 students' ability to read at grade level; and

4       7. Any recommendations for improvements or amendments to the  
5 Reading Sufficiency Act.

6       The State Department of Education may contract with an  
7 independent entity for the reporting and analysis requirements of  
8 this subsection.

9       T. Copies of the results of the assessments administered shall  
10 be made a part of the permanent record of each student.

11       SECTION 2. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
12 of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby  
13 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
14 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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