

1 **SENATE FLOOR VERSION**

2 March 4, 2026

3 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
4 FOR  
5 SENATE BILL NO. 1778

By: Pugh of the Senate

and

Hilbert of the House

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7  
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9  
10 [ reading skills - screening instruments - updates -  
11 strong readers plan - intensive intervention services  
12 - transitional instruction - retention - exception -  
notification - funds - teacher education programs -  
guidance - effective date -

emergency ]

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

17 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508C,  
18 as last amended by Section 2, Chapter 297, O.S.L. 2025 (70 O.S.  
19 Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508C), is amended to read as follows:

20 Section 1210.508C. A. To identify students who have  
21 characteristics of dyslexia that lead to or cause reading  
22 difficulty, each student enrolled in kindergarten and first, second,  
23 and third grade in a public school in this state shall be screened  
24 at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year for reading

1 skills including, but not limited to, phonological awareness,  
2 decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. A screening  
3 instrument approved by the State Board of Education, in consultation  
4 with the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability and  
5 the Secretary of Education, shall be utilized for the purposes of  
6 this section. In determining which screening instrument to approve,  
7 the State Board of Education, the Commission for Educational Quality  
8 and Accountability, and the Secretary of Education shall take into  
9 consideration at a minimum the following factors:

10 1. The time required to conduct the screening instrument with  
11 the intention of minimizing the impact on instructional time;

12 2. The timeliness in reporting screening instrument results to  
13 teachers, administrators, and parents and legal guardians of  
14 students; and

15 3. The integration of the screening instrument into reading  
16 curriculum.

17 B. Beginning in the ~~2025-2026~~ 2026-2027 school year, the State  
18 Board of Education shall approve ~~no fewer than three~~ one screening  
19 ~~instruments~~ instrument for use at the beginning, middle, and end of  
20 the school year for monitoring of progress and for measurement of  
21 reading skills as required in subsection A of this section. The  
22 screening ~~instruments~~ instrument shall meet the following criteria:

23 1. Assess for phonological awareness, decoding, fluency,  
24 vocabulary, and comprehension;

1           2. Document the validity and reliability of each assessment;

2           3. Can be used for identifying students who are at risk for  
3 reading deficiency and progress monitoring throughout the school  
4 year;

5           4. Can be used to assess students with disabilities and English  
6 language learners; and

7           5. Accompanied by a data management system that provides  
8 profiles of each student, class, grade level, and school building.

9 The profiles shall identify each student's instructional point of  
10 need and reading achievement level. The ~~State~~ Board shall also  
11 determine other comparable reading assessments for diagnostic  
12 purposes to be used for students at risk of reading failure.

13           C. 1. Exemptions to the screening requirements of this section  
14 may be provided to students who have documented evidence that they  
15 meet at least one of the following criteria as related to the  
16 provision of classroom instruction:

17               a. the student participates in the Oklahoma Alternate  
18               Assessment Program (OAAP) and is taught using  
19               alternate methods,

20               b. the student's primary expressive or receptive  
21               communication is sign language,

22               c. the student's primary form of written or read text is  
23               Braille, or

24

1           d.    the student's primary expressive or receptive language  
2                is not English, the student is identified as an  
3                English learner using a state-approved identification  
4                assessment, and the student has had less than one (1)  
5                school year of instruction in an English-learner  
6                program.

7           2.    A public school that grants an exemption pursuant to  
8                paragraph 1 of this subsection shall provide ongoing evidence of  
9                student progression toward English language acquisition with the  
10              same frequency as administration of screening assessments. Evidence  
11              may include, but not be limited to, student progression toward OAAP  
12              reading essential elements, proficiency in sign language and reading  
13              comprehension, and proficiency in Braille and reading comprehension.

14          D.    1.   Students who are administered a screening instrument  
15                pursuant to subsection A of this section and are found not to be  
16                meeting grade-level targets shall be provided a program of reading  
17                instruction designed to enable students to acquire the appropriate  
18                grade-level reading skills. The program of reading instruction  
19                shall be based on scientific reading research and align with the  
20                subject matter standards adopted by the State Board of Education. A  
21                program of reading instruction shall include:

22              a.    sufficient additional in-school instructional time for  
23                      the acquisition of phonological awareness, decoding,  
24                      fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension,

- 1           b.    if necessary and if funding is available, tutorial  
2           instruction after regular school hours, on Saturdays,  
3           and during summer; however, such instruction may not  
4           be counted toward the ~~one-hundred-eighty-day~~ one-  
5           hundred-eighty-one-day or ~~one-thousand-eighty-hour~~  
6           one-thousand-eighty-six-hour school year required in  
7           Section 1-109 of this title,
- 8           c.    assessments identified for diagnostic purposes and  
9           periodic monitoring to measure the acquisition of  
10          reading skills including, but not limited to,  
11          phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary,  
12          and comprehension, as identified in the student's  
13          program of reading instruction,
- 14          d.    high-quality instructional materials grounded in  
15          scientifically based reading research, and
- 16          e.    a means of providing every family of a student in  
17          prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first, second, and  
18          third grade access to free online evidence-based  
19          literacy instruction resources to support the  
20          student's literacy development at home.

21          2.    A student enrolled in kindergarten or first, second, or  
22          third grade who exhibits a deficiency in reading at any time based  
23          on the screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of  
24          this section shall receive an individual reading intervention plan

1 no later than thirty (30) days after the identification of the  
2 deficiency in reading. The reading intervention plan shall be  
3 provided in addition to core reading instruction that is provided to  
4 all students. The reading intervention plan shall:

- 5 a. describe the research-based reading intervention  
6 services the student will receive to remedy the  
7 deficiency in reading,
- 8 b. provide explicit and systematic instruction in  
9 phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary,  
10 and comprehension, as applicable,
- 11 c. monitor the reading progress of each student's reading  
12 skills throughout the school year and adjust  
13 instruction according to the student's needs, and
- 14 d. continue until the student is determined to be meeting  
15 grade-level targets in reading based on the screening  
16 ~~instruments~~ instrument administered pursuant to  
17 subsection A of this section or assessments identified  
18 for diagnostic purposes and periodic monitoring  
19 pursuant to subparagraph c of paragraph 1 of this  
20 subsection.

21 3. The reading intervention plan for each student identified  
22 with a deficiency in reading shall be developed by a Student Reading  
23 Proficiency Team and shall include supplemental instructional  
24 services and supports. Each team shall be composed of:

- a. the parent or legal guardian of the student,
- b. the teacher assigned to the student who had responsibility for reading instruction in that academic year,
- c. a teacher who is responsible for reading instruction and is assigned to teach in the next grade level of the student, and
- d. a certified reading specialist or an individual with advanced training or specialization in literacy instruction, if one is available.

4. A school district shall notify the parent or legal guardian of any student in kindergarten or first, second, or third grade who exhibits a deficiency in reading at any time based on the screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this section. The notification shall occur no later than thirty (30) days after the identification of the deficiency in reading.

5. For any student provided an individual reading intervention plan pursuant to this subsection, the school district shall provide at least monthly written progress updates, which may be delivered in written or electronic format, to the parent or legal guardian of the student. The updates shall include information regarding the student's progress toward meeting grade-level reading targets and the effectiveness of the instructional supports being provided.

1 E. 1. Every school district shall adopt and implement a  
2 district strong readers plan which has had input from school  
3 administrators, teachers, and parents and legal guardians and if  
4 possible a reading specialist, and which shall be submitted  
5 electronically to and approved by the State Board of Education. The  
6 plan shall be updated annually. School districts shall not be  
7 required to electronically submit the annual updates to the Board if  
8 the last plan submitted to the Board was approved and expenditures  
9 for the program include only expenses relating to individual and  
10 small group tutoring, purchase of and training in the use of  
11 screening and assessment measures, summer school programs, and  
12 Saturday school programs. If any expenditure for the program is  
13 deleted or changed or any other type of expenditure for the program  
14 is implemented, the school district shall be required to submit the  
15 latest annual update to the Board for approval. The district strong  
16 readers plan shall include a plan for each site which includes an  
17 analysis of the data provided by the Oklahoma School Testing Program  
18 and other reading assessments utilized as required in this section,  
19 and which outlines how each school site will comply with the  
20 provisions of the Strong Readers Act.

21 2. The district strong readers plan shall include a plan for  
22 how to provide transitional instruction to students identified  
23 pursuant to subsection G of this section. The plan shall stipulate  
24 whether the district will provide a stand-alone transitional

1 classroom or targeted transitional intervention instruction in pull-  
2 out sessions.

3 3. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules for the  
4 implementation and evaluation of the provisions of the Strong  
5 Readers Act. The evaluation shall include, but not be limited to,  
6 an analysis of the data required in subsection ~~F~~ M of this section.

7 F. ~~1.~~ Any first-grade, second-grade, or third-grade student  
8 who demonstrates proficiency in reading through a grade-level  
9 appropriate screening instrument approved pursuant to subsection B  
10 of this section shall not require a program of reading instruction  
11 or an individual reading intervention plan. After a student has  
12 demonstrated proficiency through a screening instrument, the  
13 district shall provide notification to the parent or legal guardian  
14 of the student that he or she has satisfied the requirements of the  
15 Strong Readers Act. The district shall continue to monitor the  
16 student in the next successive grade level to ensure he or she  
17 maintains proficiency.

18 ~~2.~~ G. 1. Beginning with the ~~2025-2026~~ 2026-2027 school year,  
19 if a first-, second-, or third-grade student is identified at any  
20 point of the academic year as having a significant reading  
21 deficiency, which shall be defined as not meeting grade-level  
22 targets on a screening instrument administered pursuant to  
23 subsection A of this section, the district shall provide the student  
24 with intensive intervention services for the appropriate amount of

1 the instructional day consistent with the individual reading  
2 intervention plan developed pursuant to paragraph 2 of subsection D  
3 of this section and as determined by the Student Reading Proficiency  
4 Team. Intensive intervention services shall continue until the  
5 student demonstrates proficiency at his or her grade level based on  
6 a screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this  
7 section.

8 2. Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, if a first-grade  
9 student identified pursuant to paragraph 1 of this subsection is not  
10 meeting grade-level targets based on administration of the screening  
11 instrument approved by the State Board of Education by the end of  
12 the first grade, the district shall place the student in a stand-  
13 alone transitional second-grade classroom or promote the student to  
14 second grade while providing targeted transitional intervention  
15 instruction in pull-out sessions.

16 3. Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, if a second-grade  
17 student identified pursuant to paragraph 1 of this subsection is not  
18 meeting grade-level targets based on administration of the screening  
19 instrument approved by the State Board of Education by the end of  
20 the second grade, the district shall place the student in a stand-  
21 alone transitional third-grade classroom or promote the student to  
22 third grade while providing targeted transitional intervention  
23 instruction in pull-out sessions.

24

1        4. Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, each third-grade  
2 student shall demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to  
3 the fourth grade. A third-grade student may demonstrate sufficient  
4 reading skills based on his or her performance on:

5            a. the screening instrument approved by the State Board  
6            of Education, or

7            b. the statewide third-grade English Language Arts  
8            assessment administered pursuant to Section 1210.508  
9            of this title.

10        5. A third-grade student who does not meet the requirements of  
11 paragraph 4 of this subsection by the end of the third grade shall  
12 be retained in the third grade. Intensive intervention services  
13 shall continue until the student demonstrates proficiency at his or  
14 her grade level.

15            a. A third-grade student subject to retention shall be  
16            provided an additional opportunity to meet grade-level  
17            targets based on administration of the screening  
18            instrument approved by the State Board of Education.  
19            The student shall be administered the screening  
20            instrument no fewer than two (2) weeks prior to the  
21            start of the next school year. If the student meets  
22            grade-level targets, he or she shall be promoted to  
23            the fourth grade, and if the student does not meet

1 grade-level targets, he or she shall be retained as  
2 provided for in this paragraph.

3 b. A third-grade student subject to retention as provided  
4 for in this paragraph may be promoted to the fourth  
5 grade only if the student has demonstrated growth in  
6 reading proficiency for two (2) consecutive years  
7 based on a metric to be determined by the State  
8 Department of Education, in conjunction with the  
9 Office of Educational Quality and Accountability.

10 c. If a third-grade student subject to retention as  
11 provided for in this paragraph transfers to a public  
12 school district, a charter school, or a virtual  
13 charter school, the requirements to retain the student  
14 in third grade shall not be altered by the receiving  
15 school.

16 ~~G.~~ H. Each school district shall annually report in an  
17 electronic format to the State Department of Education, the Office  
18 of Educational Quality and Accountability, and the Secretary of  
19 Education the number of students in kindergarten through third grade  
20 per grade level who exhibit grade-level reading proficiency, the  
21 number of students per grade level who received intensive  
22 intervention services pursuant to paragraph ~~2~~ 1 of subsection ~~F~~ G of  
23 this section, the number of students per grade level who attended a  
24 summer academy as provided for in Section 1210.508E of this title,

1 the number of students per grade level who exhibited improved  
2 reading proficiency after completion of intensive intervention  
3 services, the number of students retained pursuant to paragraph 5 of  
4 subsection G of this section, the number of students promoted  
5 pursuant to paragraph 4 of subsection G of this section, and the  
6 number of students per grade level who are still in need of  
7 intensive intervention services. The State Department of Education  
8 shall publicly report the aggregate and district-specific numbers  
9 submitted pursuant to this subsection on its website and shall  
10 provide electronic copies of the report to the Governor, Secretary  
11 of Education, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Speaker of the  
12 House of Representatives, and to the respective chairs of the  
13 committees with responsibility for common education policy in each  
14 legislative chamber.

15 ~~H.~~ I. The parent or legal guardian of any student who is found  
16 to have a reading deficiency and is not meeting grade-level reading  
17 targets and has been provided a program of reading instruction as  
18 provided for in paragraph 1 of subsection D of this section shall be  
19 notified in writing of the following:

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

22 2. A description of the current services that are provided to  
23 the student pursuant to subsection D of this section;

24

1 3. A description of the proposed intensive intervention  
2 services and supports that will be provided to the student that are  
3 designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency as  
4 provided for in paragraph ~~2~~ 1 of subsection ~~F~~ G of this section;

5 4. A description of the requirements of subsection G of this  
6 section including, but not limited to, placement in a transitional  
7 classroom or the provision of targeted transitional intervention  
8 instruction in pull-out sessions and potential retention of the  
9 student;

10 5. That a student who is promoted to the fourth grade pursuant  
11 to subparagraph b of paragraph 5 of subsection G of this section  
12 shall receive supplemental intensive intervention services;

13 ~~5.~~ 6. Strategies for parents and legal guardians to use in  
14 helping their child succeed in reading proficiency; and

15 ~~6.~~ 7. The grade-level performance scores of the student.

16 ~~7.~~ J. No student may be assigned to a grade level based solely  
17 on age or other factors that constitute social promotion.

18 ~~8.~~ K. 1. Each school district board of education shall  
19 annually publish on the school website and report electronically to  
20 the State Department of Education, the Office of Educational Quality  
21 and Accountability, and the Secretary of Education by September 1 of  
22 each year the following information on the prior school year:

- 23 a. the policies and procedures adopted by the school  
24 district board of education to implement the

1 provisions of this section. The information submitted  
2 shall include expenditures related to implementing the  
3 provisions of this section, the number of staff  
4 implementing the provisions of this section, and  
5 average daily classroom time devoted to implementing  
6 the provisions of this section,

7 b. by grade, the number and percentage of all students in  
8 kindergarten through third grade who did not meet  
9 grade-level targets based on a screening instrument  
10 administered pursuant to subsection A of this section,

11 c. by grade, the number and percentage of all students in  
12 kindergarten through third grade who have been  
13 enrolled in the district for fewer than two (2) years,

14 d. by grade, the number and percentage of students in  
15 kindergarten through third grade who demonstrated  
16 grade-level proficiency based on a screening  
17 instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of  
18 this section, and

19 e. by grade, the number and percentage of students in  
20 kindergarten through third grade who are on an  
21 individualized education program (IEP) in accordance  
22 with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  
23 (IDEA) and who demonstrated grade-level proficiency  
24 based on a screening instrument administered pursuant

1 to subsection A of this section or an alternative  
2 assessment prescribed by the student's IEP.

3 2. The State Department of Education shall establish a uniform  
4 format for school districts to report the information required in  
5 this subsection. The format shall be developed with input from  
6 school districts and shall be provided not later than ninety (90)  
7 days prior to the annual due date. The Department shall annually  
8 compile the information required, along with state-level summary  
9 information, and electronically report the information to the  
10 public, the Governor, the Secretary of Education, the President Pro  
11 Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
12 Representatives.

13 ~~K.~~ L. The State Department of Education shall provide technical  
14 assistance as needed to aid school districts in administering the  
15 provisions of the Strong Readers Act.

16 ~~L.~~ M. On or before January 31 of each year, the State  
17 Department of Education shall electronically submit to the Governor,  
18 the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of  
19 Representatives, and members of the committees with responsibility  
20 over common education in both houses of the Legislature a Strong  
21 Readers Report which shall include, but is not limited to, trend  
22 data detailing three (3) years of data, disaggregated by student  
23 subgroups to include economically disadvantaged, major racial or  
24

1 ethnic groups, students with disabilities, and English language  
2 learners, as appropriate for the following:

3 1. The statewide aggregate number and percentage of students in  
4 kindergarten through third grade determined to be at risk for  
5 reading difficulties compared to the total number of students  
6 enrolled in each grade;

7 2. The statewide aggregate number and percentage of students in  
8 kindergarten who continue to be at risk for reading difficulties as  
9 determined by the year-end administration of the screening  
10 instrument required in subsection A of this section;

11 3. The statewide aggregate number and percentage of students in  
12 kindergarten through third grade who have successfully completed  
13 their program of reading instruction and are reading on grade level  
14 as determined by the results of the screening instruments instrument  
15 administered pursuant to subsection A of this section;

16 4. The statewide aggregate and district-specific number and  
17 percentage of students that meet or do not meet grade-level targets  
18 for reading based on the screening instruments instrument  
19 administered pursuant to subsection A of this section;

20 5. The statewide aggregate and district-specific number and  
21 percentage of students retained pursuant to paragraph 5 of  
22 subsection G of this section and the number of students promoted  
23 pursuant to paragraph 4 of subsection G of this section;

24

1        6. The amount of funds received by each district for  
2 implementation of the Strong Readers Act;

3        ~~6.~~ 7. An evaluation and narrative interpretation of the report  
4 data analyzing the impact of the Strong Readers Act on students'  
5 ability to read at grade level;

6        ~~7.~~ 8. The type of reading instruction practices and methods  
7 currently being used by school districts in the state;

8        ~~8.~~ 9. Socioeconomic information, access to reading resources  
9 outside of school, and screening for and identification of learning  
10 disabilities for students not reading at the appropriate grade level  
11 in kindergarten and first through third grade;

12        ~~9.~~ 10. By grade level, the types of intensive intervention  
13 efforts being conducted by school districts for students who are not  
14 on an IEP and who are not reading at the appropriate grade level and  
15 for students who are on an IEP and who are not reading at the  
16 appropriate grade level; and

17        ~~10.~~ 11. Any recommendations for improvements or amendments to  
18 the Strong Readers Act.

19        The State Department of Education may contract with an  
20 independent entity for the reporting and analysis requirements of  
21 this subsection.

22        ~~M.~~ N. Copies of the results of the screening ~~instruments~~  
23 instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this section  
24 shall be made a part of the permanent record of each student.

1       O. The State Board of Education may use any gifts, grants,  
2 devises, and donations from any public or private source and monies  
3 appropriated by the Legislature for the purpose of implementing the  
4 provisions of the Strong Readers Act.

5       SECTION 2.       AMENDATORY       70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508F,  
6 as last amended by Section 3, Chapter 297, O.S.L. 2025 (70 O.S.  
7 Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508F), is amended to read as follows:

8       Section 1210.508F. A. The Commission for Educational Quality  
9 and Accountability shall ensure that the reading competencies for  
10 elementary teachers are included in the competencies for special  
11 education teachers.

12       B. The Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability in  
13 collaboration with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education  
14 shall ensure that all teachers and adjuncts of early childhood  
15 education, elementary education, and special education are provided  
16 quality training in intervention, instruction, and remediation  
17 strategies in the science of reading to provide explicit and  
18 systematic instruction in phonological awareness, decoding, fluency,  
19 vocabulary, and comprehension and implement reading strategies that  
20 research has shown to be successful in improving reading among  
21 students with reading difficulties. In addition, quality education  
22 for prospective teachers shall be provided in research-based  
23 instructional strategies for instruction, assessment, and  
24 intervention for literacy development for all students including

1 advanced readers, typically developing readers, and struggling  
2 readers who are coping with a range of challenges including, but not  
3 limited to, English learners and learners with handicapping  
4 conditions and learning disabilities, including dyslexia. Quality  
5 training shall include guidance from professional resources such as  
6 the Report of the National Reading Panel, Response to Intervention  
7 guidelines, and professional organizations such as the Council for  
8 Exceptional Children, International Dyslexia Association,  
9 International Literacy Association, National Council of Teachers of  
10 English, and National Association for the Education of Young  
11 Children.

12 C. All institutions within The Oklahoma State System of Higher  
13 Education that offer elementary, early childhood education, or  
14 special education programs approved by the Commission for  
15 Educational Quality and Accountability shall incorporate into those  
16 programs the requirement that teacher candidates study the five  
17 elements of reading instruction, which are phonological awareness,  
18 decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Teacher  
19 candidates shall study strategies including, but not limited to,  
20 instruction that is explicitly taught, sequenced, multimodal  
21 ~~(reading, writing, speaking, listening, hands-on, etc.)~~,  
22 multidisciplinary, and reflective to adapt for individual learners.

23 D. Each teacher education program approved by the Commission  
24 for Educational Quality and Accountability shall be audited by the

1 Commission to ensure teacher candidates are receiving quality  
2 training in the science of reading in compliance with the provisions  
3 of subsections B and C of this section. The Commission shall place  
4 the accreditation of any noncompliant teacher education program on  
5 probationary status and provide guidance for exiting probationary  
6 status.

7 E. Effective July 1, 2025, any person seeking initial  
8 certification in a special education, early childhood education, or  
9 elementary education program in this state shall be required to  
10 successfully complete a comprehensive reading instruction assessment  
11 approved by the Commission for Educational Quality and  
12 Accountability as a condition for certification. The assessment  
13 shall evaluate the certification applicant's knowledge and  
14 understanding of the five elements of reading instruction, which are  
15 phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and  
16 comprehension.

17 ~~E.~~ F. Candidates applying for adjunct positions, an alternative  
18 placement teaching certificate, or an emergency teaching certificate  
19 in elementary education shall complete instruction in the science of  
20 reading as determined by the Commission for Educational Quality and  
21 Accountability and the State Board of Education.

22 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 2026.

23 SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
24 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby

1 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
2 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

3 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
4 March 4, 2026 - DO PASS

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