

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 60th Legislature (2026)

SENATE BILL 1291

By: Hicks

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to the Strong Readers Act; amending Section 2, Chapter 288, O.S.L. 2023, as amended by Section 9, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508H), which relates to literacy instructional team; removing language establishing three-year pilot program; increasing number of literacy specialists required as certain team members; requiring biennial submission of certain report; updating contents of report; updating statutory language; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY Section 2, Chapter 288, O.S.L. 2023, as amended by Section 9, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508H), is amended to read as follows:

Section 1210.508H. A. Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, the State Department of Education shall ~~establish a three-year pilot program to~~ employ a literacy instructional team to support school districts in implementation of the requirements of Section 1210.508C of this title. The Department shall provide technical assistance for literacy instruction, dyslexia, and related

1 disorders, and serve as a primary source of information and support
2 for schools in addressing the needs of students struggling with
3 literacy, dyslexia, and related disorders.

4 B. The Department shall employ a literacy instructional team
5 with team members who are placed regionally across the state. The
6 literacy instructional ~~teams~~ team members shall assist general
7 education and special education teachers in recognizing educational
8 needs to improve literacy outcomes for all students including those
9 with dyslexia or identified with the risk characteristics associated
10 with dyslexia. The role of the literacy instructional team shall
11 also include increasing professional awareness and instructional
12 competencies to meet the educational needs of all students including
13 those with dyslexia or identified with risk characteristics
14 associated with dyslexia. The Department shall prioritize supports
15 and interventions including enrollment in reading trainings and
16 professional development for schools which have the highest
17 percentage of students who do not demonstrate sufficient reading
18 skills as established by the State Board of Education.

19 C. Literacy instructional team members employed by the
20 Department shall have training in:

21 1. The science of how students learn to read including
22 phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension,
23 writing, and language;
24

1 2. Foundation of multisensory, explicit, systematic, and
2 structured reading instruction;

3 3. Identification of and the appropriate interventions,
4 accommodations, and teaching techniques for struggling students;

5 4. The requirements of the Strong Readers Act;

6 5. Special education laws and procedures; and

7 6. Appropriate interventions, accommodations, and assistive
8 technology supports for students with dyslexia or a related
9 disorder.

10 D. The literacy instructional team members employed by the
11 Department shall report to the Program Director for Literacy at the
12 Department and have:

13 1. A minimum of five regional literacy leads, including at
14 least one who shall be designated by the Department as a dyslexia
15 specialist to provide school districts with support and resources
16 that are necessary to assist students with dyslexia. The Department
17 shall give preference to educators applying for regional literacy
18 lead who:

19 a. have an endorsement or certification as a certified
20 structured literacy dyslexia specialist or certified
21 academic language therapist,

22 b. are knowledgeable of multitiered systems of support,
23 and
24

- 1 c. have been trained in the identification of and
2 intervention for dyslexia and related disorders
3 including best practice interventions and treatment
4 models for dyslexia; and

5 2. A minimum of ~~ten~~ one hundred literacy specialists. The
6 Department shall give preference to educators applying for literacy
7 specialist who:

- 8 a. have training in the science of reading,
9 b. are knowledgeable of multitiered systems of support,
10 and
11 c. have been trained in the identification of and
12 intervention for dyslexia and related disorders
13 including best practice interventions and treatment
14 models for dyslexia.

15 E. The State Department of Education shall electronically
16 submit a report to the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the
17 Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December
18 31, 2026, and by December 31 biennially thereafter, that includes an
19 evaluation of ~~the pilot program~~ literacy instructional team members
20 by school districts to which they were assigned, data on whether the
21 ~~program~~ literacy instructional team members had an impact on
22 increasing the number of students who demonstrate proficiency in
23 reading, and recommendations for changes to the Strong Readers Act.

24 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2026.

SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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