

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 60th Legislature (2026)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

FOR

SENATE BILL 1778

By: Pugh

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

An Act relating to the Strong Readers Act; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508C, as last amended by Section 2, Chapter 297, O.S.L. 2025 (70 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508C), which relates to assessments for reading skills; modifying the number of screening instruments to be approved by the State Board of Education beginning in certain school year; requiring school districts to provide certain updates to certain parents and legal guardians; providing for contents and minimum frequency of updates; requiring a public school district's strong readers plan to include certain plan for transitional instruction; expanding grade levels of students to be given intensive intervention services under certain circumstances beginning in certain school year; requiring certain first- and second-grade students to be placed in certain transitional classroom or provided certain transitional instruction; requiring third-grade students to demonstrate sufficient reading skills beginning in certain school year; providing methods for demonstration; requiring retention of certain third-grade students; requiring additional opportunity to meet certain grade-level targets; providing exception; prohibiting a receiving school from altering certain retention requirements; requiring school districts to report certain information; requiring certain written notification to a parent or legal guardian to include certain information; requiring the Strong Readers Report to include certain information; allowing the State Board of Education to use funds from certain sources to implement the Strong Readers Act; updating statutory language; updating statutory references; amending 70

O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508F, as last amended by
Section 3, Chapter 297, O.S.L. 2025 (70 O.S. Supp.
2025, Section 1210.508F), which relates to reading
competencies for teacher education programs;
requiring certain teacher education programs to be
audited for certain compliance; directing
noncompliant programs to be placed on certain status
and given certain guidance; providing an effective
date; and declaring an emergency.

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

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

Section 1210.508C. A. To identify students who have
characteristics of dyslexia that lead to or cause reading
difficulty, each student enrolled in kindergarten and first, second,
and third grade in a public school in this state shall be screened
at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year for reading
skills including, but not limited to, phonological awareness,
decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. A screening
instrument approved by the State Board of Education, in consultation
with the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability and
the Secretary of Education, shall be utilized for the purposes of
this section. In determining which screening instrument to approve,
the State Board of Education, the Commission for Educational Quality

1 and Accountability, and the Secretary of Education shall take into
2 consideration at a minimum the following factors:

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

5 2. The timeliness in reporting screening instrument results to
6 teachers, administrators, and parents and legal guardians of
7 students; and

8 3. The integration of the screening instrument into reading
9 curriculum.

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

16 1. Assess for phonological awareness, decoding, fluency,
17 vocabulary, and comprehension;

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

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

22 4. Can be used to assess students with disabilities and English
23 language learners; and
24

1 5. Accompanied by a data management system that provides
2 profiles of each student, class, grade level, and school building.
3 The profiles shall identify each student's instructional point of
4 need and reading achievement level. The ~~State~~ Board shall also
5 determine other comparable reading assessments for diagnostic
6 purposes to be used for students at risk of reading failure.

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

- 11 a. the student participates in the Oklahoma Alternate
12 Assessment Program (OAAP) and is taught using
13 alternate methods,
- 14 b. the student's primary expressive or receptive
15 communication is sign language,
- 16 c. the student's primary form of written or read text is
17 Braille, or
- 18 d. the student's primary expressive or receptive language
19 is not English, the student is identified as an
20 English learner using a state-approved identification
21 assessment, and the student has had less than one (1)
22 school year of instruction in an English-learner
23 program.

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

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

- 16 a. sufficient additional in-school instructional time for
17 the acquisition of phonological awareness, decoding,
18 fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension,
- 19 b. if necessary and if funding is available, tutorial
20 instruction after regular school hours, on Saturdays,
21 and during summer; however, such instruction may not
22 be counted toward the ~~one-hundred-eighty-day~~ one-
23 hundred-eighty-one-day or ~~one-thousand-eighty-hour~~

1 one-thousand-eighty-six-hour school year required in
2 Section 1-109 of this title,

- 3 c. assessments identified for diagnostic purposes and
4 periodic monitoring to measure the acquisition of
5 reading skills including, but not limited to,
6 phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary,
7 and comprehension, as identified in the student's
8 program of reading instruction,
- 9 d. high-quality instructional materials grounded in
10 scientifically based reading research, and
- 11 e. a means of providing every family of a student in
12 prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first, second, and
13 third grade access to free online evidence-based
14 literacy instruction resources to support the
15 student's literacy development at home.

16 2. A student enrolled in kindergarten or first, second, or
17 third grade who exhibits a deficiency in reading at any time based
18 on the screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of
19 this section shall receive an individual reading intervention plan
20 no later than thirty (30) days after the identification of the
21 deficiency in reading. The reading intervention plan shall be
22 provided in addition to core reading instruction that is provided to
23 all students. The reading intervention plan shall:

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

3. The reading intervention plan for each student identified with a deficiency in reading shall be developed by a Student Reading Proficiency Team and shall include supplemental instructional 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,

1 c. a teacher who is responsible for reading instruction
2 and is assigned to teach in the next grade level of
3 the student, and

4 d. a certified reading specialist or an individual with
5 advanced training or specialization in literacy
6 instruction, if one is available.

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

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

20 E. 1. Every school district shall adopt and implement a
21 district strong readers plan which has had input from school
22 administrators, teachers, and parents and legal guardians and if
23 possible a reading specialist, and which shall be submitted
24 electronically to and approved by the State Board of Education. The

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

16 2. The district strong readers plan shall include a plan for
17 how to provide transitional instruction to students identified
18 pursuant to subsection G of this section. The plan shall stipulate
19 whether the district will provide a stand-alone transitional
20 classroom or targeted transitional intervention instruction in pull-
21 out sessions.

22 3. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules for the
23 implementation and evaluation of the provisions of the Strong
24

1 Readers Act. The evaluation shall include, but not be limited to,
2 an analysis of the data required in subsection ~~±~~ M of this section.

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

14 ~~2.~~ G. 1. Beginning with the ~~2025-2026~~ 2026-2027 school year,
15 if a first-, second-, or third-grade student is identified at any
16 point of the academic year as having a significant reading
17 deficiency, which shall be defined as not meeting grade-level
18 targets on a screening instrument administered pursuant to
19 subsection A of this section, the district shall provide the student
20 with intensive intervention services for the appropriate amount of
21 the instructional day consistent with the individual reading
22 intervention plan developed pursuant to paragraph 2 of subsection D
23 of this section and as determined by the Student Reading Proficiency
24 Team. Intensive intervention services shall continue until the

1 student demonstrates proficiency at his or her grade level based on
2 a screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this
3 section.

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

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

20 4. Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, each third-grade
21 student shall demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to
22 the fourth grade. A third-grade student may demonstrate sufficient
23 reading skills based on his or her performance on:
24

- a. the screening instrument approved by the State Board of Education, or
- b. the statewide third-grade English Language Arts assessment administered pursuant to Section 1210.508 of this title.

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

- a. A third-grade student subject to retention shall be provided an additional opportunity to meet grade-level targets based on administration of the screening instrument approved by the State Board of Education. The student shall be administered the screening instrument no fewer than two (2) weeks prior to the start of the next school year. If the student meets grade-level targets, he or she shall be promoted to the fourth grade, and if the student does not meet grade-level targets, he or she shall be retained as provided for in this paragraph.
- b. A third-grade student subject to retention as provided for in this paragraph may be promoted to the fourth grade only if the student has demonstrated growth in

1 reading proficiency for two (2) consecutive years
2 based on a metric to be determined by the State
3 Department of Education, in conjunction with the
4 Office of Educational Quality and Accountability.

5 c. If a third-grade student subject to retention as
6 provided for in this paragraph transfers to a public
7 school district, a charter school, or a virtual
8 charter school, the requirements to retain the student
9 in third grade shall not be altered by the receiving
10 school.

11 ~~G.~~ H. Each school district shall annually report in an
12 electronic format to the State Department of Education, the Office
13 of Educational Quality and Accountability, and the Secretary of
14 Education the number of students in kindergarten through third grade
15 per grade level who exhibit grade-level reading proficiency, the
16 number of students per grade level who received intensive
17 intervention services pursuant to paragraph ~~2~~ 1 of subsection ~~F~~ G of
18 this section, the number of students per grade level who attended a
19 summer academy as provided for in Section 1210.508E of this title,
20 the number of students per grade level who exhibited improved
21 reading proficiency after completion of intensive intervention
22 services, the number of students retained pursuant to paragraph 5 of
23 subsection G of this section, the number of students promoted
24 pursuant to paragraph 4 of subsection G of this section, and the

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

10 ~~H.~~ I. The parent or legal guardian of any student who is found
11 to have a reading deficiency and is not meeting grade-level reading
12 targets and has been provided a program of reading instruction as
13 provided for in paragraph 1 of subsection D of this section shall be
14 notified in writing of the 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 pursuant to subsection D of this section;

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

23 4. A description of the requirements of subsection G of this
24 section including, but not limited to, placement in a transitional

1 classroom or the provision of targeted transitional intervention
2 instruction in pull-out sessions and potential retention of the
3 student;

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

7 ~~5.~~ 6. Strategies for parents and legal guardians to use in
8 helping their child succeed in reading proficiency; and

9 ~~6.~~ 7. The grade-level performance scores of the student.

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

12 ~~8.~~ K. 1. Each school district board of education shall
13 annually publish on the school website and report electronically to
14 the State Department of Education, the Office of Educational Quality
15 and Accountability, and the Secretary of Education by September 1 of
16 each year the following information on the prior school year:

- 17 a. the policies and procedures adopted by the school
18 district board of education to implement the
19 provisions of this section. The information submitted
20 shall include expenditures related to implementing the
21 provisions of this section, the number of staff
22 implementing the provisions of this section, and
23 average daily classroom time devoted to implementing
24 the provisions of this section,

- b. by grade, the number and percentage of all students in kindergarten through third grade who did not meet grade-level targets based on a screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this section,
- c. by grade, the number and percentage of all students in kindergarten through third grade who have been enrolled in the district for fewer than two (2) years,
- d. by grade, the number and percentage of students in kindergarten through third grade who demonstrated grade-level proficiency based on a screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this section, and
- e. by grade, the number and percentage of students in kindergarten through third grade who are on an individualized education program (IEP) in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and who demonstrated grade-level proficiency based on a screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this section or an alternative assessment prescribed by the student's IEP.

2. The State Department of Education shall establish a uniform format for school districts to report the information required in this subsection. The format shall be developed with input from school districts and shall be provided not later than ninety (90)

1 days prior to the annual due date. The Department shall annually
2 compile the information required, along with state-level summary
3 information, and electronically report the information to the
4 public, the Governor, the Secretary of Education, the President Pro
5 Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
6 Representatives.

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

10 ~~L.~~ M. On or before January 31 of each year, the State
11 Department of Education shall electronically submit to the Governor,
12 the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of
13 Representatives, and members of the committees with responsibility
14 over common education in both houses of the Legislature a Strong
15 Readers Report which shall include, but is not limited to, trend
16 data detailing three (3) years of data, disaggregated by student
17 subgroups to include economically disadvantaged, major racial or
18 ethnic groups, students with disabilities, and English language
19 learners, as appropriate for the following:

20 1. The statewide aggregate number and percentage of students in
21 kindergarten through third grade determined to be at risk for
22 reading difficulties compared to the total number of students
23 enrolled in each grade;

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

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

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

14 5. The statewide aggregate and district-specific number and
15 percentage of students retained pursuant to paragraph 5 of
16 subsection G of this section and the number of students promoted
17 pursuant to paragraph 4 of subsection G of this section;

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

20 ~~6.~~ 7. An evaluation and narrative interpretation of the report
21 data analyzing the impact of the Strong Readers Act on students'
22 ability to read at grade level;

23 ~~7.~~ 8. The type of reading instruction practices and methods
24 currently being used by school districts in the state;

~~8.~~ 9. Socioeconomic information, access to reading resources

outside of school, and screening for and identification of learning disabilities for students not reading at the appropriate grade level in kindergarten and first through third grade;

~~9.~~ 10. By grade level, the types of intensive intervention

efforts being conducted by school districts for students who are not on an IEP and who are not reading at the appropriate grade level and for students who are on an IEP and who are not reading at the appropriate grade level; and

~~10.~~ 11. Any recommendations for improvements or amendments to

the Strong Readers Act.

The State Department of Education may contract with an

independent entity for the reporting and analysis requirements of this subsection.

~~M.~~ N. Copies of the results of the screening ~~instruments~~

instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this section shall be made a part of the permanent record of each student.

O. The State Board of Education may use any gifts, grants,

devises, and donations from any public or private source and monies appropriated by the Legislature for the purpose of implementing the provisions of the Strong Readers Act.

SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508F,

as last amended by Section 3, Chapter 297, O.S.L. 2025 (70 O.S.

Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508F), is amended to read as follows:

1 Section 1210.508F. A. The Commission for Educational Quality
2 and Accountability shall ensure that the reading competencies for
3 elementary teachers are included in the competencies for special
4 education teachers.

5 B. The Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability in
6 collaboration with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
7 shall ensure that all teachers and adjuncts of early childhood
8 education, elementary education, and special education are provided
9 quality training in intervention, instruction, and remediation
10 strategies in the science of reading to provide explicit and
11 systematic instruction in phonological awareness, decoding, fluency,
12 vocabulary, and comprehension and implement reading strategies that
13 research has shown to be successful in improving reading among
14 students with reading difficulties. In addition, quality education
15 for prospective teachers shall be provided in research-based
16 instructional strategies for instruction, assessment, and
17 intervention for literacy development for all students including
18 advanced readers, typically developing readers, and struggling
19 readers who are coping with a range of challenges including, but not
20 limited to, English learners and learners with handicapping
21 conditions and learning disabilities, including dyslexia. Quality
22 training shall include guidance from professional resources such as
23 the Report of the National Reading Panel, Response to Intervention
24 guidelines, and professional organizations such as the Council for

1 Exceptional Children, International Dyslexia Association,
2 International Literacy Association, National Council of Teachers of
3 English, and National Association for the Education of Young
4 Children.

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

16 D. Each teacher education program approved by the Commission
17 for Educational Quality and Accountability shall be audited by the
18 Commission to ensure teacher candidates are receiving quality
19 training in the science of reading in compliance with the provisions
20 of subsections B and C of this section. The Commission shall place
21 the accreditation of any noncompliant teacher education program on
22 probationary status and provide guidance for exiting probationary
23 status.

24

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

11 ~~E.~~ F. Candidates applying for adjunct positions, an alternative
12 placement teaching certificate, or an emergency teaching certificate
13 in elementary education shall complete instruction in the science of
14 reading as determined by the Commission for Educational Quality and
15 Accountability and the State Board of Education.

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

17 SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
18 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby
19 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
20 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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