

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 60th Legislature (2026)

HOUSE BILL 4149

By: Hasenbeck

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to the Strong Readers Act; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508A, as amended by Section 3, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508A), which relates to the short title; updating references; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508B, as amended by Section 4, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508B), which relates to legislative findings; declaring intent of the Legislature; 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 reading screenings; including reading deficiencies for identification in screenings; prohibiting reading instruction for deficient students from including the three-cueing systems model; allowing certain students to be placed in a transition class; adding additional requirements to parent notifications regarding the child's reading deficiency; directing the State Department of Education to create a reading panel to recommend alternate reading assessments; establishing reading panel members and duties; requiring demonstration of sufficient reading skills for promotion to fourth grade; mandating that third-grade students be retained in the third grade if certain conditions are not met; providing good-cause exemptions from third grade retention; requiring fourth-grade students promoted with a good-cause exemption be provided intensive reading instruction; implementing a good-cause exemption request process; adding parental notification requirement of student retention; requiring intensive reading intervention for retained students; detailing additional support and services to be provided to retained students; requiring schools to establish an intensive

1 acceleration class for students retained more than
2 once; adding school district reporting requirements;
3 adding State Department of Education reporting
4 requirements; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section
5 1210.508F, as last amended by Section 3, Chapter 297,
6 O.S.L. 2025 (70 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508F),
7 which relates to teacher training requirements;
8 clarifying instruction to prospective teachers;
9 mandating that teacher candidates receive certain
10 instruction regarding the three-cueing systems model;
11 creating a requirement to demonstrate an eighth-grade
12 reading level for minors to obtain a driver license;
13 establishing criteria for satisfying reading tester
14 requirements for a driver license for public school
15 students; requiring students under eighteen to
16 complete a reading proficiency test; requiring a plan
17 of remedial reading if assessments are not
18 successfully completed; providing an option for
19 students to take alternative reading proficiency
20 tests if the assessments are not successful; allowing
21 students to take an alternative reading test for
22 motorcycle licenses; establishing alternative reading
23 testing site requirements; requiring school districts
24 provide alternative documentation of reading
proficiency if applicable; establishing alternative
documentation requirements; allowing students to
submit reading proficiency test results from other
states; requiring the Department of Education to
approve or disapprove out of state test results;
creating requirement for documentation of school
enrollment, completion, or lawful excuse for minors
to obtain a driver license; requiring minors to
demonstrate reading proficiency at an eighth-grade
reading level unless excused; establishing exception
for summer months; establishing documentation
requirements for students educated by other means;
establishing misdemeanor for violations; providing
alternate route to obtain driver license for certain
employed persons under eighteen; establishing
employer fines for falsification; requiring
attendance officers to provide documentation;
requiring attendance officers to notify Department of
Public Safety of certain student withdrawals;
requiring notification of license cancellation in
certain circumstances; providing exceptions for
notice requirements; requiring school districts to
provide documentation of reading proficiency to

1 certain enrolled students; defining terms; providing
2 exceptions to reading proficiency requirements;
3 requiring the Department of Public Safety to approve
4 forms; providing for codification; providing an
5 effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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

7 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508A,
8 as amended by Section 3, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp.
9 2025, Section 1210.508A), is amended to read as follows:

10 Section 1210.508A. Sections 1210.508A through ~~1210.508H~~
11 1210.508I of this title shall be known and may be cited as the
12 "Strong Readers Act".

13 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508B,
14 as amended by Section 4, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp.
15 2025, Section 1210.508B), is amended to read as follows:

16 Section 1210.508B. A. The Legislature finds that it is
17 essential for children in the public schools to read early and well
18 in elementary school. The Legislature further finds that clear and
19 visible goals, assessments to determine the reading level at each
20 elementary school, use of a scientifically based and researched
21 methodology in reading instruction in addition to regular and
22 periodic measurements of elementary school reading improvement, and
23 accountability in each level of the educational system will result
24

1 in a significant increase in the number of children reading at or
2 above grade level.

3 B. The purpose of the Strong Readers Act is to ensure that
4 progression from one grade to another is determined, in part, upon
5 proficiency in reading, that school district board of education
6 policies facilitate reading instruction and intervention services to
7 address student reading needs, and that each student and his or her
8 parent or legal guardian be informed of that student's reading
9 progress. It is the intent of the Legislature that every student
10 reads at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

11 C. Each public school district in this state shall ensure that
12 all students receive a well-rounded education that is focused on
13 building deep foundations in reading, writing, and mathematics. The
14 State Board of Education shall encourage school districts to
15 integrate the teaching of the other curricular areas in the subject
16 matter standards adopted by the Board with the instruction of
17 reading, writing, and mathematics. All teachers of reading in the
18 public schools in this state in kindergarten through third grade
19 shall incorporate into instruction the five elements of reading
20 instruction which are phonological awareness, decoding, fluency,
21 vocabulary, and comprehension.

22 D. It is the intent of the Legislature that beginning with the
23 2025-2026 school year, school districts and charter schools in this
24 state shall be prohibited from using the three-cueing system model

1 of teaching students to read. For the purposes of this section, the
2 "three-cueing system" means any model of teaching students to read
3 based on meaning, structure, syntax, and visual cues, which may also
4 be known as meaning, structure, and visual (MSV), balanced literacy,
5 or whole language.

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

9 Section 1210.508C. A. To identify students who have a reading
10 deficiency or characteristics of dyslexia that lead to or cause
11 reading difficulty, each student enrolled in kindergarten and first,
12 second, and third grade in a public school in this state shall be
13 screened at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year for
14 reading skills including, but not limited to, phonological
15 awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. A
16 screening instrument approved by the State Board of Education, in
17 consultation with the Commission for Educational Quality and
18 Accountability and the Secretary of Education, shall be utilized for
19 the purposes of this section. In determining which screening
20 instrument to approve, the State Board of Education, the Commission
21 for Educational Quality and Accountability, and the Secretary of
22 Education shall take into consideration at a minimum the following
23 factors:

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

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

6 3. The integration of the screening instrument into reading
7 curriculum.

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

14 1. Assess for phonological awareness, decoding, fluency,
15 vocabulary, and comprehension;

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

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

20 4. Can be used to assess students with disabilities and English
21 language learners; and

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

24 The profiles shall identify each student's instructional point of

1 need and reading achievement level. The State Board shall also
2 determine other comparable reading assessments for diagnostic
3 purposes to be used for students at risk of reading failure.

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

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

21 2. A public school that grants an exemption pursuant to
22 paragraph 1 of this subsection shall provide ongoing evidence of
23 student progression toward English language acquisition with the
24 same frequency as administration of screening assessments. Evidence

1 may include, but not be limited to, student progression toward OAAP
2 reading essential elements, proficiency in sign language and reading
3 comprehension, and proficiency in Braille and reading comprehension.

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

- 12 a. sufficient additional in-school instructional time for
13 the acquisition of phonological awareness, decoding,
14 fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension,
- 15 b. if necessary and if funding is available, tutorial
16 instruction after regular school hours, on Saturdays,
17 and during summer; however, such instruction may not
18 be counted toward the one-hundred-eighty-day or one-
19 thousand-eighty-hour school year required in Section
20 1-109 of this title,
- 21 c. assessments identified for diagnostic purposes and
22 periodic monitoring to measure the acquisition of
23 reading skills including, but not limited to,
24 phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary,

1 and comprehension, as identified in the student's
2 program of reading instruction,

3 d. high-quality instructional materials grounded in
4 scientifically based reading research which do not
5 include the three-cueing systems model as described in
6 subsection D of Section 1210.508B of this title, and

7 e. a means of providing every family of a student in
8 prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first, second, and
9 third grade access to free online evidence-based
10 literacy instruction resources to support the
11 student's literacy development at home.

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

20 a. describe the research-based reading intervention
21 services the student will receive to remedy the
22 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 screening instruments 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,
- c. a teacher who is responsible for reading instruction and is assigned to teach in the next grade level of the student, and

1 d. a certified reading specialist or an individual with
2 advanced training or specialization in literacy
3 instruction, if one is available.

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

10 5. A student enrolled in kindergarten or first, second, or
11 third grade who exhibits a deficiency in reading at any time based
12 on the screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of
13 this section may be placed in a transition class.

14 E. 1. Every school district shall adopt and implement a
15 district strong readers plan which has had input from school
16 administrators, teachers, and parents and legal guardians and if
17 possible a reading specialist, and which shall be submitted
18 electronically to and approved by the State Board of Education. The
19 plan shall be updated annually. School districts shall not be
20 required to electronically submit the annual updates to the Board if
21 the last plan submitted to the Board was approved and expenditures
22 for the program include only expenses relating to individual and
23 small group tutoring, purchase of and training in the use of
24 screening and assessment measures, summer school programs, and

1 Saturday school programs. If any expenditure for the program is
2 deleted or changed or any other type of expenditure for the program
3 is implemented, the school district shall be required to submit the
4 latest annual update to the Board for approval. The district strong
5 readers plan shall include a plan for each site which includes an
6 analysis of the data provided by the Oklahoma School Testing Program
7 and other reading assessments utilized as required in this section,
8 and which outlines how each school site will comply with the
9 provisions of the Strong Readers Act.

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

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

1 2. Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, if a third-grade
2 student is identified at any point of the academic year as having a
3 significant reading deficiency, which shall be defined as not
4 meeting grade-level targets on a screening instrument administered
5 pursuant to subsection A of this section, the district shall provide
6 the student with intensive intervention services for the appropriate
7 amount of the instructional day consistent with the individual
8 reading intervention plan developed pursuant to paragraph 2 of
9 subsection D of this section and as determined by the Student
10 Reading Proficiency Team. Intensive intervention services shall
11 continue until the student demonstrates proficiency at his or her
12 grade level based on a screening instrument administered pursuant to
13 subsection A of this section.

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

1 services, and the number of students per grade level who are still
2 in need of intensive intervention services. The State Department of
3 Education shall publicly report the aggregate and district-specific
4 numbers submitted pursuant to this subsection on its website and
5 shall provide electronic copies of the report to the Governor,
6 Secretary of Education, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Speaker
7 of the 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. The parent of any student who is found to have a reading
11 deficiency and is not meeting grade-level reading targets and has
12 been provided a program of reading instruction as provided for in
13 paragraph 1 of subsection D of this section shall be notified in
14 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 of subsection F of this section;

23 4. That if the child's reading deficiency is not corrected by
24 the end of third grade, the child shall not be promoted to fourth

1 grade unless a good-cause exemption specified under subsection L of
2 this section is met;

3 5. That a student who is promoted to the fourth grade for good
4 cause shall receive supplemental intensive intervention services;

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

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

8 8. That while the statewide English Language Arts assessment is
9 the initial determinate for promotion, approved alternative
10 standardized reading assessments are available to assist the school
11 district in knowing when a child is reading at or above grade level
12 and ready for promotion to fourth grade.

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

15 J. The State Department of Education shall establish an
16 Oklahoma Reading Panel to collaborate with the State Department of
17 Education in recommending appropriate equitable alternative
18 standardized reading assessments and cut scores to be used to
19 determine promotion to the fourth grade for third-grade students who
20 scored at the lowest achievement level on the statewide English
21 Language Arts assessment or who, for unforeseen circumstances, were
22 unable to take the assessment. The panel shall consist of six (6)
23 members as follows:

1 1. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction, or his or
2 her designee, who will chair the panel;

3 2. The Chair of the House Education Oversight Committee, or his
4 or her designee;

5 3. The Chair of the Senate Education Committee, or his or her
6 designee;

7 4. One member appointed by the Governor; and

8 5. Two additional members appointed by the State Superintendent
9 of Public Instruction.

10 K. 1. Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, third-grade
11 students shall demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion
12 to fourth grade. Students shall be provided the following options
13 to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to fourth
14 grade:

15 a. scoring above the lowest achievement level on the
16 third-grade statewide English Language Arts
17 Assessment, or

18 b. earning an acceptable score on an alternative
19 standardized reading assessment as determined and
20 approved by the State Board of Education.

21 2. Students who do not demonstrate sufficient reading skills in
22 accordance with paragraph 1 of this subsection, shall not be
23 promoted to the fourth grade unless a good-cause exemption specified
24

1 under subsection L of this section is met. Screening instruments
2 described in this section shall not be used for promotion purposes.

3 L. 1. The district school board may only exempt students from
4 mandatory third grade retention, as provided in subsection K of this
5 section, for good cause. A student who is promoted to fourth grade
6 with a good-cause exemption shall continue to receive intensive
7 reading intervention that includes specific reading strategies
8 prescribed in the student's individual reading intervention plan
9 until the deficiency is remedied. The school district shall assist
10 schools and teachers with the implementation of reading strategies
11 that research has shown to be successful in improving reading among
12 students with reading difficulties. Good-cause exemptions shall be
13 limited to the following:

14 a. students with disabilities whose Individual Education
15 Plan (IEP) indicates that participation in the
16 statewide assessment program is not appropriate,
17 consistent with state law,

18 b. students identified as English language learners who
19 have had less than two (2) years of instruction in an
20 English-learner program,

21 c. students with disabilities who participate in the
22 statewide English Language Arts assessment and who
23 have an IEP or a Section 504 plan that reflects that
24 the student has received intensive reading

intervention for more than two (2) years but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading, or who was previously retained for one (1) year in kindergarten, first, second, or third grade,

d. students who demonstrate an acceptable level of reading proficiency on an alternative standardized reading assessment approved by the State Board of Education, and

e. students who have received intensive reading intervention for two (2) or more years but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading, and who were previously retained in kindergarten, first, second, or third grade for a total of two (2) years.

2. A student who is promoted to fourth grade with a good-cause exemption shall be provided intensive reading instruction and intervention informed by specialized diagnostic information and delivered through specific reading strategies to meet the needs of each student so promoted. The school district shall assist schools and teachers in implementing reading strategies that research has shown to be successful in improving reading among students with persistent reading difficulties.

M. Requests to exempt students from the mandatory third-grade retention requirement, as provided in subsection K of this section,

1 using one of the good-cause exemptions, as described in subsection L
2 of this section, shall be made consistent with the following:

3 1. Documentation shall be submitted from the student's teacher
4 to the school principal indicating that the promotion of the student
5 is appropriate. Such documentation shall consist only of the good-
6 cause exemption being requested and clear proof that the student is
7 covered by such exemption; and

8 2. The school principal shall review and discuss the
9 recommendation for exemption with the student's teacher. If the
10 principal determines that the student meets one of the good-cause
11 exemptions based on the discussion and documentation provided, the
12 school principal shall make such recommendation in writing to the
13 school district superintendent. The school district superintendent
14 shall accept or reject the school principal's recommendation in
15 writing. A parent or legal guardian of any student promoted under
16 this section may choose that the student be retained for one (1)
17 year, even if the principal and district superintendent determine
18 otherwise.

19 N. The school district shall assist schools with providing
20 written notification to the parent of any student who is retained.
21 Such notification shall state that his or her child has not met the
22 reading level required for promotion to the fourth grade, the
23 reasons the child is not eligible for a good-cause exemption, and
24 that his or her child will be retained in third grade. The

1 notification shall include a description of the proposed
2 interventions and supports that will be provided to the child to
3 remedy the identified areas of reading deficiency in the retained
4 year.

5 0. Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, students retained
6 under the provisions of subsection K of this section shall be
7 provided intensive reading intervention to remedy the student's
8 specific reading deficiency. The reading intervention services
9 shall include effective instructional strategies to accelerate
10 student progress. Each school district shall conduct a review of
11 student reading intervention plans for all students retained in
12 third grade. The review shall address additional supports and
13 services needed to remedy the identified areas of reading deficiency
14 and ensure the following are provided to retained students:

15 1. A highly effective teacher of reading as demonstrated by
16 student reading performance data, teacher performance evaluations,
17 or specific training relevant to implementation of this section;

18 2. A minimum of ninety (90) minutes during regular school hours
19 of daily, scientifically research-based reading instruction that
20 includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and
21 comprehension, and other strategies prescribed by the school
22 district, which may include, but are not limited to:

23 a. small group instruction,

24 b. reduced teacher-to-student ratios,

- c. tutoring in scientifically research-based reading
- services in addition to the regular school day,
- d. the option of transition classes,
- e. extended school day, week or year, and
- f. summer reading camps; and

3. A "Read at Home" plan outlined in a parental contract,
including participation in regular parent-guided home reading.

P. Each school shall establish an intensive acceleration class
for any student retained in third grade who was previously retained
in kindergarten, first, or second grade. The focus of the intensive
acceleration class is to increase a student's reading level at least
two (2) grade levels in one (1) school year. The intensive
acceleration class shall include the additional supports and
services described in subsection O of this section and:

1. Provide explicit, systematic, sequential, and cumulative
reading instruction and intervention for the majority of student
contact time each day; and

2. Incorporate opportunities to master the fourth-grade state
standards in other core academic areas.

Q. 1. Each school district board of education shall annually
publish on the school website and report electronically to the State
Department of Education, the Office of Educational Quality and
Accountability, and the Secretary of Education by September 1 of
each year the following information on the prior school year:

- 1 a. the policies and procedures adopted by the school
2 district board of education to implement the
3 provisions of this section. The information submitted
4 shall include expenditures related to implementing the
5 provisions of this section, the number of staff
6 implementing the provisions of this section, and
7 average daily classroom time devoted to implementing
8 the provisions of this section,
- 9 b. by grade, the number and percentage of all students in
10 kindergarten through third grade who did not meet
11 grade-level targets based on a screening instrument
12 administered pursuant to subsection A of this section,
- 13 c. by grade, the number and percentage of all students in
14 kindergarten through third grade who have been
15 enrolled in the district for fewer than two (2) years,
- 16 d. by grade, the number and percentage of all students in
17 kindergarten through third grade who were retained,
- 18 e. by grade, the number and percentage of students in
19 kindergarten through third grade who demonstrated
20 grade-level proficiency based on a screening
21 instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of
22 this section, ~~and~~
- 23 ~~e.~~
- 24

1 f. by grade, the number and percentage of students in
2 kindergarten through third grade who are on an
3 individualized education program (IEP) in accordance
4 with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
5 (IDEA) and who demonstrated grade-level proficiency
6 based on a screening instrument administered pursuant
7 to subsection A of this section or an alternative
8 assessment prescribed by the student's IEP,

9 g. the number and percentage of all students in third
10 grade who demonstrated sufficient reading skills for
11 promotion to the next grade on the alternative reading
12 assessment,

13 h. the number and percentage of students in third grade
14 who were promoted to fourth grade for good cause, by
15 category of good cause as specified in subsection L of
16 this section, and

17 i. the performance of fourth-grade students promoted with
18 a good-cause exemption on the statewide English
19 Language Arts assessment.

20 2. The State Department of Education shall establish a uniform
21 format for school districts to report the information required in
22 this subsection. The format shall be developed with input from
23 school districts and shall be provided not later than ninety (90)
24 days prior to the annual due date. The Department shall annually

1 compile the information required, along with state-level summary
2 information, and electronically report the information to the
3 public, the Governor, the Secretary of Education, the President Pro
4 Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
5 Representatives.

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

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

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

23 2. The statewide aggregate number and percentage of students in
24 kindergarten who continue to be at risk for reading difficulties as

1 determined by the year-end administration of the screening
2 instrument required in subsection A of this section;

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

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

12 5. The statewide aggregate and district-specific number and
13 percentage of students that were retained in third grade;

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

16 ~~6.~~ 7. An evaluation and narrative interpretation of the report
17 data analyzing the impact of the Strong Readers Act on students'
18 ability to read at grade level;

19 ~~7.~~ 8. The type of reading instruction practices and methods
20 currently being used by school districts in the state;

21 ~~8.~~ 9. Socioeconomic information, access to reading resources
22 outside of school, and screening for and identification of learning
23 disabilities for students not reading at the appropriate grade level
24 in kindergarten and first through third grade;

1 ~~9.~~ 10. By grade level, the types of intensive intervention
2 efforts being conducted by school districts for students who are not
3 on an IEP and who are not reading at the appropriate grade level and
4 for students who are on an IEP and who are not reading at the
5 appropriate grade level; and

6 ~~10.~~ 11. Any recommendations for improvements or amendments to
7 the Strong Readers Act.

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

11 ~~M.~~ T. Copies of the results of the screening instruments
12 administered pursuant to subsection A of this section shall be made
13 a part of the permanent record of each student.

14 SECTION 4. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508F,
15 as last amended by Section 3, Chapter 297, O.S.L. 2025 (70 O.S.
16 Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508F), is amended to read as follows:

17 Section 1210.508F. A. The Commission for Educational Quality
18 and Accountability shall ensure that the reading competencies for
19 elementary teachers are included in the competencies for special
20 education teachers.

21 B. The Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability in
22 collaboration with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
23 shall ensure that all teachers and adjuncts of early childhood
24 education, elementary education, and special education are provided

1 quality training in intervention, instruction, and remediation
2 strategies in the science of reading to provide explicit and
3 systematic instruction in phonological awareness, decoding, fluency,
4 vocabulary, and comprehension and implement reading strategies that
5 research has shown to be successful in improving reading among
6 students with reading difficulties. In addition, quality education
7 for prospective teachers shall be provided in research-based
8 instructional strategies for instruction, assessment, and
9 intervention for literacy development for all students including
10 advanced readers, typically developing readers, and struggling
11 readers who are coping with a range of challenges including, but not
12 limited to, English learners, learners at risk for reading
13 deficiencies, and learners with handicapping conditions and learning
14 disabilities, including dyslexia. Quality training shall include
15 guidance from professional resources such as the Report of the
16 National Reading Panel, Response to Intervention guidelines, and
17 professional organizations such as the Council for Exceptional
18 Children, International Dyslexia Association, International Literacy
19 Association, National Council of Teachers of English, and National
20 Association for the Education of Young Children.

21 C. All institutions within The Oklahoma State System of Higher
22 Education that offer elementary, early childhood education, or
23 special education programs approved by the Commission for
24 Educational Quality and Accountability shall incorporate into those

1 programs the requirement that teacher candidates study the five
2 elements of reading instruction which are phonological awareness,
3 decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Teacher
4 candidates shall study strategies including, but not limited to,
5 instruction that is explicitly taught, sequenced, multimodal
6 (reading, writing, speaking, listening, hands-on, etc.),
7 multidisciplinary, and reflective to adapt for individual learners.
8 Additionally, teacher candidates shall study:

9 1. How to implement reading instruction using high-quality
10 instructional materials which do not include the three-cueing
11 systems model;

12 2. The negative impacts of the three-cueing systems model;

13 3. How to identify the three-cueing systems model in
14 curriculum; and

15 4. Why the three-cueing systems model is a flawed model of
16 teaching children to read.

17 D. Effective July 1, 2025, any person seeking initial
18 certification in a special education, early childhood education, or
19 elementary education program in this state shall be required to
20 successfully complete a comprehensive reading instruction assessment
21 approved by the Commission for Educational Quality and
22 Accountability as a condition for certification. The assessment
23 shall evaluate the certification applicant's knowledge and
24 understanding of the five elements of reading instruction which are

1 phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and
2 comprehension.

3 E. Candidates applying for adjunct positions, an alternative
4 placement teaching certificate, or an emergency teaching certificate
5 in elementary education shall complete instruction in the science of
6 reading as determined by the Commission for Educational Quality and
7 Accountability and the State Board of Education.

8 SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
9 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1210.515A of Title 70, unless
10 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

11 A. Pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 2 of subsection A of
12 Section 6 of this act, any person under the age of eighteen (18)
13 years wishing to apply for a driver license or permit shall
14 successfully demonstrate a satisfactory reading ability at the
15 eighth-grade reading level by meeting the following criteria:

16 1. A student enrolled in a public school shall successfully
17 complete the reading portion of the statewide assessment
18 administered pursuant to Section 1210.508 of this title and that is
19 offered in the eighth grade. Following the administration of this
20 assessment in the eighth grade, any student not successfully
21 completing the reading portion shall be assigned a plan of remedial
22 reading. Any student not successful in completing the reading
23 portion of the state assessment may take a comparable alternative
24 reading proficiency test to satisfy the criteria for a driver

1 license or permit. Alternative reading proficiency tests shall be
2 approved by the State Department of Education. Subsequent
3 successful completion of an alternative reading proficiency test
4 shall serve to satisfy any retake requirement for the reading
5 portion of the state assessment in the eighth grade in the Oklahoma
6 School Testing Program. School districts shall notify, in writing,
7 each student who takes the reading portion of the state assessment
8 for the eighth grade or who takes an alternative reading proficiency
9 test and the student's parent or legal guardian of the results. If
10 the student fails to perform satisfactorily on the test, the notice
11 shall inform the student of the reading proficiency driver license
12 requirement and the school's remediation plan for the student. Upon
13 the student's successful completion of the test, the school shall
14 furnish the student with the documentation needed for the driver
15 license application in Oklahoma;

16 2. Unless alternatively documented according to the provisions
17 of subsection C of this section, students under the age of eighteen
18 (18) years shall successfully complete a reading proficiency test
19 approved by the State Department of Education; and

20 3. Any student who wishes to apply for a restricted license to
21 operate a motorcycle may take an alternative reading proficiency
22 test, subject to the provisions of this section.

23 B. Alternative reading proficiency tests shall be offered by
24 testing sites:

1 1. Which shall include the public schools at least four times
2 per calendar year;

3 2. And may include any of the following which choose to
4 participate;

5 3. The technology center school districts;

6 4. Regional Education Service Centers;

7 5. Colleges;

8 6. Accredited private schools; and

9 7. Other sites approved by the State Department of Education.

10 A student may take the test as often as wished, subject to the
11 provisions of this section. Testing sites shall provide the first
12 alternative reading proficiency test for each student at no cost.
13 Students may be assessed a fee not to exceed Twenty-five Dollars
14 (\$25.00) by the testing site for each subsequent alternative reading
15 proficiency test taken.

16 C. A school district shall provide for alternative
17 documentation of reading proficiency for the purposes of paragraph 2
18 of subsection A of Section 6 of this act for any student with an
19 individualized education program (IEP) that, at a minimum, is in an
20 area related to reading. The alternative documentation shall be
21 furnished to such student who is performing satisfactorily in
22 reading pursuant to the individualized education program of the
23 student. Parents of disabled students educated pursuant to the
24 provisions of Section 4 of Article XIII of the Oklahoma Constitution

1 may satisfy the requirement of paragraph 2 of subsection A of
2 Section 6 of this act by signing an affidavit that, based upon their
3 best information and belief, their child would qualify for an
4 individualized education program that, at a minimum, is in an area
5 related to reading if enrolled in public school, and that in their
6 judgment their child is performing satisfactorily in reading and is
7 therefore academically qualified to satisfy the requirement of
8 paragraph 2 of subsection A of Section 6 of this act.

9 D. Any person under the age of eighteen (18) who has previously
10 completed and successfully passed a reading proficiency test from
11 another state may submit the results of such test to the State
12 Department of Education for verification and approval. The State
13 Department of Education shall have thirty (30) days from receipt of
14 the reading proficiency results submitted by the person to verify
15 that the reading proficiency requirements from the other state are
16 equivalent or comparable to the reading proficiency requirements
17 established for Oklahoma students pursuant to this section. Upon
18 verification and approval by the State Department of Education, the
19 Department shall furnish the person with the documentation needed
20 for the driver license application in Oklahoma. If the reading
21 proficiency documentation submitted by the person is disapproved by
22 the Department, the person may take an alternative reading
23 proficiency test as provided for in subsection B of this section.

1 SECTION 6. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified

2 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-107.8 of Title 47, unless
3 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

4 A. The Department of Public Safety shall deny a license,
5 restricted license, or instruction permit for the operation of a
6 motor vehicle to any person under eighteen (18) years of age who
7 does not, at the time of application, present documentation that
8 such person:

- 9 1. a. is a student enrolled in a public or private secondary
10 school, including any technology center school, of
11 this state or any other state,
12 b. has received a diploma or certificate of completion
13 issued to the person from a secondary school of this
14 state or any other state,
15 c. is enrolled and making satisfactory progress in a
16 program leading to a Certificate of High School
17 Equivalency issued by the State Department of
18 Education, or has obtained such certificate,
19 d. is excused from such requirement pursuant to a lawful
20 excuse as defined in subsection G of this section or
21 due to circumstances beyond the control of the person,
22 or
23 e. is excused from such requirement pursuant to
24 subsection C of this section; and

1 2. Has successfully passed the criterion-referenced reading
2 test required for all eighth-grade students or an alternative
3 reading proficiency test approved by the State Department of
4 Education, pursuant to the provisions of Section 5 of this act,
5 demonstrating reading proficiency at the eighth-grade reading level,
6 unless such student is excused from such requirement pursuant to the
7 provisions of Section 5 of this act. Provided, during the summer
8 months when school is not in regular session, as established by the
9 school district pursuant to Section 1-109 of Title 70 of the
10 Oklahoma Statutes, a person under eighteen (18) years of age may
11 satisfy the documentation requirement of this subsection by
12 providing a notarized written statement from and signed by the legal
13 custodial parent or legal guardian of the person to the Department
14 of Public Safety stating that the person completed the immediately
15 previous school year and is enrolled or intends to enroll for the
16 immediately subsequent school year.

17 B. 1. A person under eighteen (18) years of age who is
18 receiving education by other means, including education at home
19 pursuant to Section 4 of Article XIII of the Oklahoma Constitution,
20 shall satisfy the documentation requirement of paragraph 1 of
21 subsection A of this section by providing a written statement from
22 and signed by the legal custodial parent or legal guardian of the
23 person to the Department of Public Safety stating that the person is
24

1 receiving instruction by other means pursuant to Section 4 of
2 Article XIII of the Oklahoma Constitution.

3 2. Any person who falsifies the information required in such
4 documentation, upon conviction, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

5 C. 1. A person under eighteen (18) years of age, who does not
6 meet the requirements of subparagraphs a through c of paragraph 1 of
7 subsection A of this section or the requirements of subsection B of
8 this section, may retain or be issued a driver license if:

9 a. the person is employed at least twenty-four (24) hours
10 per week, and

11 b. the employer of the person verifies the employment on
12 a form prescribed by the Department of Public Safety.

13 2. Any person who has retained or been issued a driver license
14 pursuant to this subsection who leaves such employment shall have
15 fifteen (15) days from the date of termination of employment to
16 provide verification of employment from a new employer.

17 3. Any employer who falsifies a verification of employment
18 shall be subject to an administrative fine of not more than Fifty
19 Dollars (\$50.00), to be assessed by the Department of Public Safety.

20 D. 1. School district attendance officers, upon request, shall
21 provide a documentation of enrollment status form, established and
22 approved by the Department of Public Safety, to any person under
23 eighteen (18) years of age who is properly enrolled in a school for
24 which the attendance officer is responsible, for presentation to the

1 Department of Public Safety upon application for or reinstatement of
2 an instruction permit, restricted license, or license to operate a
3 motor vehicle.

4 2. Except as provided in subsection E of this section, whenever
5 a person over fourteen (14) years of age and under eighteen (18)
6 years of age, who has a driver license or permit issued by the
7 Department of Public Safety, withdraws from school, the attendance
8 officer shall notify the Department of Public Safety of such
9 withdrawal through a documentation of enrollment status form.

10 3. Within fifteen (15) working days of the receipt of such
11 notice, the Department of Public Safety shall provide written notice
12 to the person, by first-class, postage-prepaid mail, that the
13 license of the person will be canceled thirty (30) days following
14 the date the notice to the person was sent, unless documentation of
15 compliance with the provisions of this section is received by the
16 Department of Public Safety before such time. After the thirty-day
17 period, the Department of Public Safety shall cancel the driving
18 privileges of the person.

19 E. When the withdrawal from school of a person under eighteen
20 (18) years of age is:

- 21 1. Due to circumstances beyond the control of the person;
- 22 2. Pursuant to any lawful excuse; or
- 23 3. For the purpose of transfer to another school, including
24 education at home pursuant to Section 4 of Article XIII of the

Oklahoma Constitution, as confirmed in writing by the legal custodial parent or legal guardian of the person, no notice as required by subsection D of this section shall be sent to the Department of Public Safety, or, if sent, such notice shall be disregarded by the Department of Public Safety. If the person is applying for a driver license, restricted driver license, or instruction permit, the attendance officer shall provide the person with documentation to present to the Department of Public Safety to excuse the person from the requirements of this section.

F. Every school district shall, upon request, provide documentation of reading proficiency for any person under eighteen (18) years of age enrolled in such school district by certifying passage of a reading examination pursuant to the provisions of Section 5 of this act.

G. As used in this section:

1. "Withdrawal" means more than ten (10) consecutive days, or parts of days, of unexcused absences or fifteen (15) days, or parts of days, total unexcused absences during a single semester;

2. "Lawful excuse" means absence from school pursuant to any valid physical or mental illness or pursuant to any legal excuse as provided in Section 10-105 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes; provided, however, the meaning of such term shall not include marriage;

1 3. "Circumstances beyond the control of the person" shall not
2 include marriage, suspension or expulsion from school, or
3 imprisonment in a jail, penitentiary or other correctional
4 institution;

5 4. "Documentation of enrollment status form" means the document
6 established and approved by the Department of Public Safety to
7 substantiate information concerning the eligibility of a person
8 under eighteen (18) years of age to apply for or to retain a license
9 or permit to drive. Such documentation shall not include any
10 information which is considered an education record pursuant to the
11 Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C., Sections 1232g
12 through 1232i, unless compliance is made with the restrictions
13 regarding disclosure of the information; and

14 5. "Documentation of reading proficiency" means information
15 provided by a school authorized by subsection B of Section 5 of this
16 act to certify the eligibility of a person under eighteen (18) years
17 of age to apply for a license or permit based on passage of a
18 reading proficiency test approved by the State Department of
19 Education, or pursuant to the alternative documentation criteria
20 provided in subsection C of Section 5 of this act. Such
21 documentation shall not include any information which is considered
22 an education record pursuant to the Family Education Rights and
23 Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C., Sections 1232g through 1232i, unless

1 compliance is made with the restrictions regarding disclosure of the
2 information.

3 H. The provisions of this section shall be inapplicable with
4 respect to any person under eighteen (18) years of age upon whom
5 rights of majority have been conferred pursuant to Sections 91
6 through 94 of Title 10 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

7 I. The Department of Public Safety shall establish and approve
8 documentation forms and certificates required by this section for
9 use by school districts to comply with the provisions of this
10 section. Upon establishment and approval of such forms and
11 certificates, the Department of Public Safety shall notify each
12 school district and the State Board of Education of the content
13 thereof.

14 SECTION 7. This act shall become effective July 1, 2026.

15 SECTION 8. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
16 of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby
17 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
18 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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