

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 60th Legislature (2026)

3 HOUSE BILL 4420

By: Hilbert

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5

6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to the Strong Readers Act; amending
8 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508A, as amended by
9 Section 3, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp.
10 2025, Section 1210.508A), which relates to the short
11 title of the act; updating references; amending 70
12 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508B, as amended by Section
13 4, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp. 2025,
14 Section 1210.508B), which relates to legislative
15 findings; declaring intent of the Legislature;
16 amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508C, as last
17 amended by Section 2, Chapter 297, O.S.L. 2025 (70
18 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508C), which relates to
19 reading screenings; including reading deficiencies
20 for identification in screenings; requiring the
21 Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability
22 to evaluate three screening instruments; requiring
23 the State Department of Education to choose one
24 screening instrument; removing reference to
additional reading assessments; clarifying additional
skills assessed in screenings; prohibiting reading
instruction for deficient students from including the
three-cueing systems model and other similar models;
including certain fourth grade students in receiving
reading intervention plans; including certain
reporting in accreditation requirements; adding
additional requirements to parent notifications
regarding the child's reading deficiency; requiring
certain reading deficient kindergarten through third
grade students to receive intensive intervention;
requiring more reading interventions for certain
incoming third grade students; requiring teachers to
gather evidence of learning for certain student
portfolios; requiring a review of progress and
additional services for certain incoming third grade
students; requiring demonstration of sufficient

1 reading skills for promotion to fourth grade;
2 mandating that third grade students be retained in
3 the third grade if certain conditions are not met;
4 providing good-cause exemptions from third grade
5 retention; implementing a good cause exemption
6 request process; adding parental notification
7 requirement of student retention; requiring intensive
8 reading intervention for retained students; detailing
9 additional support and services to be provided to
10 retained students; requiring schools to establish an
11 intensive acceleration class for students retained
12 more than once; adding school district reporting and
13 publication requirements; adding State Department of
14 Education reporting requirements; amending 70 O.S.
15 2021, Section 1210.508E, as amended by Section 7,
16 Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section
17 1210.508E), which relates to summer academy programs;
18 clarifying that summer reading academies shall
19 include services to correct reading deficiencies;
20 requiring school districts to provide summer reading
21 academies to certain students; mandating minimum
22 hours of instructional time; requiring certain
23 student recommendations to summer programs for third
24 through eighth grades; 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 teacher training requirements;
clarifying instruction to prospective teachers;
mandating that teacher candidates receive certain
instruction regarding balanced literacy and whole
language models; 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 the literacy instructional team;
making the literacy instructional team pilot program
permanent; requiring the literacy instructional team
to provide certain job support for K-3 teachers;
increasing minimum regional literacy leads; creating
the Strong Readers Revolving Fund; designating source
of funds; designating Department to receive and
expend funds; requiring donors to designate specific
places to receive monies; requiring strict adherence
to donor designations; and providing an effective
date.

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

2 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508A,
3 as amended by Section 3, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp.
4 2025, Section 1210.508A), is amended to read as follows:

5 Section 1210.508A. Sections 1210.508A through ~~1210.508H~~
6 1210.508I of this title shall be known and may be cited as the
7 "Strong Readers Act".

8 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508B,
9 as amended by Section 4, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp.
10 2025, Section 1210.508B), is amended to read as follows:

11 Section 1210.508B. A. The Legislature finds that it is
12 essential for children in the public schools to read early and well
13 in elementary school. The Legislature further finds that clear and
14 visible goals, assessments to determine the reading level at each
15 elementary school, use of a scientifically based and researched
16 methodology in reading instruction in addition to regular and
17 periodic measurements of elementary school reading improvement, and
18 accountability in each level of the educational system will result
19 in a significant increase in the number of children reading at or
20 above grade level.

21 B. The purpose of the Strong Readers Act is to ensure that
22 progression from one grade to another is determined, in part, upon
23 proficiency in reading, that school district board of education
24 policies facilitate reading instruction and intervention services to

1 address student reading needs, and that each student and his or her
2 parent or legal guardian be informed of that student's reading
3 progress. It is the intent of the Legislature that every student
4 reads at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

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

16 D. It is the intent of the Legislature that beginning with the
17 2025-2026 school year, school districts and charter schools in this
18 state shall be prohibited from using the three-cueing system model
19 of teaching students to read. For the purposes of this section, the
20 "three-cueing system" means any model of teaching students to read
21 based on meaning, structure, syntax, and visual cues, which may also
22 be known as meaning, structure, and visual (MSV), balanced literacy,
23 or whole language.

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

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

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

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

4 3. The integration of the screening instrument into reading
5 curriculum.

6 B. Beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, the ~~State Board of~~
7 ~~Education shall approve no fewer than three screening instruments~~
8 ~~for use at Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability~~
9 ~~shall evaluate and rank up to three screening instruments, from~~
10 ~~which the State Board of Education shall select one for use at the~~
11 ~~beginning, middle, and end of the school year for monitoring of~~
12 ~~progress and for measurement of reading skills as required in~~
13 ~~subsection A of this section. The selected screening instruments~~
14 ~~instrument~~ shall meet the following criteria:

15 1. Assess for phonological awareness, sound symbol recognition,
16 alphabet knowledge, rapid naming skills, decoding and encoding
17 skills, oral reading accuracy and fluency, vocabulary, and
18 comprehension as developmentally appropriate;

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

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

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

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 or one-
23 thousand-eighty-hour school year required in Section
24 1-109 of this title,

- c. assessments identified for diagnostic purposes and periodic monitoring to measure the acquisition of reading skills including, but not limited to, phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as identified in the student's program of reading instruction,
- d. high-quality instructional materials grounded in ~~scientifically based reading research~~ the science of reading designed to reduce the risk of reading failure, which do not include balanced literacy and whole language models, such as three-cueing, and are selected from a vetted list approved by the State Board of Education, and
- e. a means of providing every family of a student in prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first, second, and third grade access to free online evidence-based literacy instruction resources to support the student's literacy development at home.

19 2. A student enrolled in kindergarten or first, second, or
20 third grade who exhibits a deficiency in reading at any time based
21 on the screening instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of
22 this section and any fourth grade student promoted for good cause
23 pursuant to subsection L of this section shall receive an individual
24 reading intervention plan no later than thirty (30) days after the

1 identification of the deficiency in reading. The reading
2 intervention plan shall be provided in addition to core reading
3 instruction that is provided to all students. The reading
4 intervention plan shall:

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

20 3. The reading intervention plan for each student identified
21 with a deficiency in reading shall be developed by a Student Reading
22 Proficiency Team and shall include supplemental instructional
23 services and supports. Districts shall report student reading

1 intervention plans annually to the State Department of Education as
2 part of its annual accreditation. Each team shall be composed of:

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

13 4. A school district shall notify the parent or legal guardian
14 of any student in kindergarten or first, second, or third grade who
15 exhibits a deficiency in reading at any time based on the screening
16 instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of this section.

17 The notification shall occur no later than ~~thirty (30)~~ seven (7)
18 days after the identification of the deficiency in reading.

19 E. 1. Every school district shall adopt and implement a
20 district strong readers plan which has had input from school
21 administrators, teachers, and parents and legal guardians, and ~~if~~
22 ~~possible~~ a reading specialist, and which shall be submitted
23 electronically to and approved by the State Board of Education. The
24 plan shall be updated annually. School districts shall not be

1 required to electronically submit the annual updates to the Board if
2 the last plan submitted to the Board was approved and expenditures
3 for the program include only expenses relating to individual and
4 small group tutoring, purchase of and training in the use of
5 screening and assessment measures, summer school programs, and
6 Saturday school programs. If any expenditure for the program is
7 deleted or changed or any other type of expenditure for the program
8 is implemented, the school district shall be required to submit the
9 latest annual update to the Board for approval. The district strong
10 readers plan shall include a plan for each site which includes an
11 analysis of the data provided by the Oklahoma School Testing Program
12 and other reading assessments utilized as required in this section,
13 and which outlines how each school site will comply with the
14 provisions of the Strong Readers Act.

15 2. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules for the
16 implementation and evaluation of the provisions of the Strong
17 Readers Act. The evaluation shall include, but not be limited to,
18 an analysis of the data required in subsection ~~E~~ S of this section.

19 F. 1. Any first-grade, second-grade, or third-grade student
20 who demonstrates proficiency in reading through a grade-level
21 appropriate screening instrument approved pursuant to subsection B
22 of this section shall not require a program of reading instruction
23 or an individual reading intervention plan. After a student has
24 demonstrated proficiency through a screening instrument, the

1 district shall provide notification to the parent or legal guardian
2 of the student that he or she has satisfied the minimum requirements
3 of the Strong Readers Act within thirty (30) days. The district
4 shall continue to monitor the student in the next successive grade
5 level to ensure he or she maintains grade-level proficiency.

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

19 G. Each school district shall annually report in an electronic
20 format to the State Department of Education, the Office of
21 Educational Quality and Accountability, and the Secretary of
22 Education the number of students in kindergarten through third grade
23 per grade level who exhibit grade-level reading proficiency, the
24 number of students per grade level who received intensive

1 intervention services pursuant to paragraph 2 of subsection F of
2 this section, the number of students per grade level who attended a
3 summer academy as provided for in Section 1210.508E of this title,
4 the number of students per grade level who exhibited improved
5 reading proficiency after completion of intensive intervention
6 services, and the number of students per grade level who are still
7 in need of intensive intervention services. The State Department of
8 Education shall publicly report the aggregate and district-specific
9 numbers submitted pursuant to this subsection on its website and
10 shall provide electronic copies of the report to the Governor,
11 Secretary of Education, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Speaker
12 of the House of Representatives, and to the respective chairs of the
13 committees with responsibility for common education policy in each
14 legislative chamber.

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

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

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

24

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

5 4. That the parent shall be informed in writing of the child's
6 progress toward grade level reading at least once a month;

7 5. That if the child's reading deficiency is not remediated by
8 the end of third grade, the child shall not be promoted to fourth
9 grade unless a good-cause exemption is met;

10 6. That a student who is promoted to the fourth grade for good
11 cause shall receive supplemental intensive intervention services
12 unless they are a student who meets the definition of a student with
13 the most significant cognitive disabilities;

14 5. Strategies 7. A description of the specific skill deficits
15 of the child and strategies for parents to use in helping their
16 child succeed in reading proficiency; and

17 6. 8. The grade-level performance scores of the student; and

18 9. That while the statewide English Language Arts assessment is
19 the initial determinate for promotion, students may be provided with
20 a test-based student portfolio option and an alternative reading
21 assessment option that is approved by the State Department of
22 Education or Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability
23 to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to fourth
24 grade.

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

3 J. 1. Any incoming third-grade student identified with a
4 reading deficiency shall be provided more intensified interventions
5 to remedy his or her specific reading deficiency. Intervention
6 services shall include effective instructional strategies to
7 accelerate student progress and be delivered by a highly effective
8 teacher of reading as demonstrated by student reading performance
9 data and teacher performance evaluations.

10 2. At the beginning of the student's third-grade year, teachers
11 shall begin to collect evidence of learning over time for students
12 identified with a reading deficiency who may be promoted under
13 alternative options approved by the State Board of Education. A
14 review of individualized progress monitoring plans shall be
15 conducted for all incoming third-grade students identified with a
16 reading deficiency. The review shall address additional supports
17 and services the student will receive. The supports and services
18 shall include:

19 a. reading instruction and intervention services and
20 supports to correct any identified area of reading
21 deficiency,
22 b. daily targeted small group reading intervention based
23 on student need, including explicit, systematic,
24 sequential and cumulative instruction with detailed

1 explanations, extensive opportunities for guided
2 practice, and opportunities for error correction and
3 feedback, and

4 c. specialized supplemental reading intervention before
5 or after school delivered by a highly effective
6 teacher of reading as demonstrated by student reading
7 performance data and teacher performance evaluations.

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

13 a. scoring above the below basic level on the third grade
14 statewide English Language Arts assessment,
15 b. earning an acceptable score on an alternative
16 standardized reading assessment as determined and
17 approved by the State Board of Education, or
18 c. demonstrating mastery of third grade state reading
19 standards as evidenced through a test-based student
20 portfolio option. The State Department of Education
21 shall promulgate rules to set criteria for the
22 alternative options approved by the State Board of
23 Education and shall define how mastery of third grade
24 reading standards are met.

1 2. If the third grade student cannot demonstrate sufficient
2 reading skills on one of the three options described in subparagraph
3 1 of this subsection and does not qualify for a good-cause
4 exemption, the student shall be retained in the third grade for the
5 next school year. Screening instruments described in this section
6 shall not be used for promotion purposes.

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

20 1. Students with disabilities whose Individualized Education
21 Program (IEP) indicates that participation in the statewide
22 assessment program is not appropriate, consistent with state law;

1 2. Students identified as English language learners who have
2 had less than two (2) years of instruction in an English-learner
3 program;

4 3. Students with disabilities who participate in the statewide
5 English Language Arts assessment and who have an IEP or a Section
6 504 plan that reflects that the student has received intensive
7 reading intervention for more than two (2) years but still
8 demonstrates a deficiency in reading, or who was previously retained
9 for one (1) year in kindergarten, first, second, or third grade; and

10 4. Students who have received intensive reading intervention
11 for two (2) or more years but still demonstrate a deficiency in
12 reading, and who were previously retained in kindergarten, first,
13 second, or third grade for a total of two (2) years. No student
14 shall be retained twice in third grade.

15 M. Requests to exempt students from the mandatory third grade
16 retention requirement, as provided in subsection K of this section,
17 using one of the good-cause exemptions, as described in subsection L
18 of this section, shall be made consistent with the following:

19 1. Documentation shall be submitted from the student's teacher
20 to the school principal indicating that the promotion of the student
21 is appropriate. Such documentation shall consist only of the good
22 cause exemption being requested, and the existing reading
23 intervention plan or IEP; and

1 2. The school principal shall review and discuss the
2 recommendation for exemption with the student's teacher. If the
3 principal determines that the student meets one of the good-cause
4 exemptions based on the discussion and documentation provided, the
5 school principal shall make such recommendation in writing to the
6 school district superintendent. The school district superintendent
7 shall accept or reject the school principal's recommendation in
8 writing.

9 N. The school district shall provide written notification to
10 the parent of any student who is retained. Such notification shall
11 state that his or her child has not met the reading level required
12 for promotion to the fourth grade, the reasons the child is not
13 eligible for a good-cause exemption, and that his or her child will
14 be retained in third grade. The notification shall include a
15 description of the proposed interventions and supports that will be
16 provided to the child to remedy the identified areas of reading
17 deficiency in the retained year.

18 O. Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, students retained
19 under the provisions of subsection K of this section shall be
20 provided intensive reading intervention to remedy the student's
21 specific reading deficiency. The reading intervention services
22 shall include effective instructional strategies to accelerate
23 student progress. Each school district shall conduct a review of
24 student reading intervention plans for all students retained in

1 third grade. The review shall address additional supports and
2 services needed to remedy the identified areas of reading deficiency
3 and ensure the following are provided to retained students:

4 1. A highly effective teacher of reading as demonstrated by
5 student reading performance data and teacher performance
6 evaluations;

7 2. Reading intervention services and supports to correct the
8 identified areas of reading deficiency, including, but not limited
9 to:

- 10 a. more dedicated time than the previous school year in
11 scientifically research-based reading instruction and
12 intervention,
- 13 b. use of reading strategies and programs from a
14 preapproved list approved by the State Board of
15 Education that are scientifically research-based and
16 have proven results in accelerating student reading
17 achievement within the same school year,
- 18 c. daily targeted small group reading intervention based
19 on student needs, including explicit and systematic
20 instruction with detailed explanations, extensive
21 opportunities for guided practice, and opportunities
22 for error correction and feedback, and

d. frequent monitoring of the reading progress of each student's reading skills throughout the school year and adjusting instruction according to student needs;

3. The option of a transitional instructional setting. Such

setting shall be designed to produce learning gains sufficient to meet fourth grade performance standards in all other core academic areas while continuing to correct the areas of reading deficiency;

4. Before or after school supplemental research-based reading

intervention delivered by a teacher or tutor with specialized reading training; and

5. A "Read at Home" plan as created by the Office of

Educational Quality and Accountability shall be outlined in a parental contract, including participation in parent training

workshops or regular parent-guided home reading activities which are aligned to scientifically based reading research.

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 intensive acceleration class shall include the additional supports and services described

in subsection 0 of this section and provide explicit, systematic,

sequential, and cumulative reading instruction and intervention for the majority of student contact time each day.

Q. 1. Each school district board of education shall annually publish on the school website and report electronically to the State

1 Department of Education, the Office of Educational Quality and
2 Accountability, and the Secretary of Education by September 1 of
3 each year the following information on the prior school year:

4 a. the policies and procedures adopted by the school
5 district board of education to implement the
6 provisions of this section. The information submitted
7 shall include expenditures related to implementing the
8 provisions of this section, the number of staff
9 implementing the provisions of this section, and
10 average daily classroom time devoted to implementing
11 the provisions of this section,

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

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

19 d. by grade, the number and percentage of all students in
20 kindergarten through third grade who were retained,

21 e. by grade, the number and percentage of students in
22 kindergarten through third grade who demonstrated
23 grade-level proficiency based on a screening

1 instrument administered pursuant to subsection A of
2 this section, and

3 e.

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

12 g. the number and percentage of all students in third
13 grade who demonstrated sufficient reading skills for
14 promotion to the next grade on the test-based student
15 portfolio,

16 h. the number and percentage of all students in third
17 grade who demonstrated sufficient reading skills for
18 promotion to the next grade on the alternative reading
19 assessment,

20 i. the number and percentage of students in third grade
21 who were promoted to fourth grade for good cause, by
22 category of good cause as specified in subsection L of
23 this section,

j. the performance of fourth grade students on the statewide English Language Arts assessment who were promoted with a good-cause exemption in the previous school year.

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

15 K. R. The State Department of Education shall provide technical
16 assistance as needed to aid school districts in administering the
17 provisions of the Strong Readers Act.

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

1 subgroups to include economically disadvantaged, major racial or
2 ethnic groups, students with disabilities, and English language
3 learners, as appropriate for the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 6. 7. An evaluation and narrative interpretation of the report
2 data analyzing the impact of the Strong Readers Act on students'
3 ability to read at grade level;

4 7. 8. The type of reading instruction practices and methods
5 currently being used by school districts in the state;

6 8. 9. Socioeconomic information, access to reading resources
7 outside of school, and screening for and identification of learning
8 disabilities for students not reading at the appropriate grade level
9 in kindergarten and first through third grade;

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

15 10. 11. Any recommendations for improvements or amendments to
16 the Strong Readers Act.

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

20 M. T. Copies of the results of the screening instruments
21 administered pursuant to subsection A of this section shall be made
22 a part of the permanent record of each student.

23
24

1 SECTION 4. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508E,
2 as amended by Section 7, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp.
3 2025, Section 1210.508E), is amended to read as follows:

4 Section 1210.508E. A. If a teacher determines that a student
5 in kindergarten or first through third grade is not reading at grade
6 level by the end of the second quarter of the school year, the
7 parent or legal guardian of the student shall be notified of:

8 1. The reading level of the student;

9 2. The program of reading instruction for the student as
10 required pursuant to the Strong Readers Act; and

11 3. The potential need for the student to participate in a
12 summer academy or other program designed to assist the student in
13 attaining grade-level reading skills.

14 B. A teacher who determines a student in kindergarten or first
15 through third grade is not meeting grade-level targets for reading
16 may, after consultation with the parent or legal guardian of the
17 student, recommend that the student participate in and complete a
18 summer academy or other program.

19 C. Summer academy programs shall be designed to ensure that
20 participating students successfully complete grade-level
21 competencies in reading to enhance next-grade readiness. A summer
22 academy reading program shall be a program that incorporates the
23 content of a scientifically research-based professional development
24 program administered by the Commission for Educational Quality and

1 Accountability or a scientifically research-based reading program
2 administered by the State Board of Education and is taught by
3 teachers who have ~~successfully completed professional development in~~
4 ~~the reading program demonstrated their effectiveness through student~~
5 reading data and evaluations or who are certified as reading
6 specialists. Teachers shall provide explicit, systematic,
7 sequential, and cumulative reading intervention services and
8 supports to correct students' identified areas of reading
9 deficiency.

10 D. School districts may approve an option for students who are
11 unable to attend a summer academy. The optional program may
12 include, but is not limited to, an approved private provider of
13 instruction, approved computer- or Internet-based instruction, or an
14 approved program of reading instruction monitored by the parent or
15 legal guardian. School districts shall not be required to pay for
16 the optional program but shall clearly communicate to the parent or
17 legal guardian the expectations of the program and any costs that
18 may be involved.

19 E. ~~Subject to the availability of funds, beginning School~~
20 districts shall provide summer reading academies to all third grade
21 students scoring at the lowest achievement level on the third grade
22 statewide English Language Arts assessment, as well as students who
23 have completed kindergarten through third grade and are at risk of
24 reading deficiency as determined by a screening instrument

1 administered pursuant to subsection A of Section 1210.508C of this
2 title. Summer reading academies shall include, at a minimum,
3 seventy (70) hours of instructional time in reading and shall not
4 use balanced literacy and whole language models, such as three-
5 cueing as defined in subsection D of Section 1210.508B of this
6 title.

7 F. Beginning one (1) year after implementation of this section,
8 the requirements of subsection B of this section may shall be
9 expanded to apply to students in fourth grade. Each year
10 thereafter, the requirements may shall be expanded by one grade
11 level until the requirements apply to third-grade students through
12 eighth-grade students. Summer academy programs shall be designed
13 for each grade level. Nothing in this section shall prevent the
14 State Board of Education or a school district board of education
15 from utilizing private, local, or federal funds to implement this
16 section.

17 F. G. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to
18 implement the provisions of this section which shall include
19 requirements for instructional time for summer academy programs,
20 teacher qualifications, and evaluation of student achievement as a
21 result of summer academy programs or other optional programs.

22 SECTION 5. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 1210.508F,
23 as last amended by Section 3, Chapter 297, O.S.L. 2025 (70 O.S.
24 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 language learners, students at risk for reading
21 deficiencies, and learners students with handicapping conditions and
22 learning disabilities, including dyslexia. Quality training shall
23 include guidance from professional resources such as the Report of
24 the National Reading Panel, Response to Intervention guidelines, and

1 professional organizations such as the Council for Exceptional
2 Children, International Dyslexia Association, International Literacy
3 Association, National Council of Teachers of English, and National
4 Association for the Education of Young 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 and the study
12 methods based on the science of reading. Teacher candidates shall
13 study strategies including, but not limited to, instruction that is
14 explicitly taught, sequenced, multimodal (reading, writing,
15 speaking, listening, hands-on, etc.), multidisciplinary, and
16 reflective to adapt for individual learners. Additionally, teacher
17 candidates shall study the negative impacts of balanced literacy and
18 whole language models, including three-cueing practices. They shall
19 further study how to identify balanced literacy and whole language
20 models including three-cueing practices in curriculum, and
21 subsequently, learn how to implement reading instruction using high
22 quality instructional materials grounded in the science of reading
23 which do not include balanced literacy and whole language models
24 such as three-cueing, and the negative impacts of three-cueing.

1 D. 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 be aligned to scientifically-based reading research and
8 evaluate the certification applicant's knowledge and understanding
9 of the five elements of reading instruction which are phonological
10 awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

11 E. 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 6. AMENDATORY Section 2, Chapter 288, O.S.L.
17 2023, as amended by Section 9, Chapter 411, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S.
18 Supp. 2025, Section 1210.508H), is amended to read as follows:

19 Section 1210.508H. A. Beginning with the 2023-2024 school
20 year, the State Department of Education shall establish a ~~three-year~~
21 ~~pilot~~ program to employ a literacy instructional team to support
22 school districts in implementation of the requirements of Section
23 1210.508C of this title. The Department shall provide technical
24 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 in six major geographic
6 regions across the state. The literacy instructional teams shall
7 assist general education and special education teachers in
8 recognizing educational needs to improve literacy outcomes for all
9 students including those with reading deficiencies, dyslexia, or
10 identified with the risk characteristics associated with dyslexia.
11 Priority shall be given to lowest performing schools on the end of
12 year English language arts assessment. The role of the literacy
13 instructional team shall also include increasing professional
14 awareness and instructional competencies to meet the educational
15 needs of all students including those with reading deficiencies,
16 dyslexia, or identified with risk characteristics associated with
17 dyslexia. The Department shall prioritize supports and
18 interventions including enrollment in reading trainings and
19 professional development for schools which have the highest
20 percentage of students who do not demonstrate sufficient reading
21 skills as established by the State Board of Education.

22 C. The literacy instructional team shall provide job-embedded
23 coaching support for kindergarten through third grade reading
24 teachers that includes but is not limited to:

1 1. Onsite teacher training on evidence-based reading
2 instruction and data-based decision making to support the
3 effectiveness of classroom reading instruction;

4 2. Demonstration lessons;

5 3. Co-teaching; and

6 4. Feedback for improving instruction.

7 D. Literacy instructional team members employed by the
8 Department shall be required to pass Oklahoma's "Foundations of
9 Reading" test and shall have training in:

10 1. The science of how students learn to read including
11 phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension,
12 writing, and language;

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

15 3. Identification of and the use of appropriate interventions,
16 accommodations, and teaching techniques for ~~struggling~~ students with
17 dysgraphia, dyslexia, a related reading disorder, or reading
18 deficiency;

19 4. The requirements of the Strong Readers Act;

20 5. Special education laws and procedures; and

21 6. Appropriate interventions, accommodations, and assistive
22 technology supports for students with dyslexia or a related
23 disorder.

1 D. E. The literacy instructional team members employed by the
2 Department shall report to the Program Director for Literacy at the
3 Department and have:

4 1. A minimum of ~~five twenty~~ regional literacy leads, at least
5 one who shall be designated by the Department as a dyslexia
6 specialist to provide school districts with support and resources
7 that are necessary to assist students with dyslexia. The Department
8 shall give preference to educators applying for regional literacy
9 lead who:

10 a. have an endorsement or certification as a certified
11 structured literacy dyslexia specialist or certified
12 academic language therapist,

13 b. are knowledgeable of multitiered systems of support,
14 and

15 c. have been trained in the identification of and
16 ~~intervention for dyslexia and related disorders~~
17 ~~including best practice the use of appropriate~~
18 ~~interventions and treatment models for,~~
19 ~~accommodations, and teaching techniques for students~~
20 ~~with dysgraphia, dyslexia, a related reading disorder,~~
21 ~~or reading deficiency;~~ and

22 2. A ~~minimum of ten literacy specialists minimum of one~~
23 ~~literacy specialist, or access to a contracted literacy specialist,~~

1 for each public elementary school. The Department shall give
2 preference to educators applying for literacy specialist who:
3 a. have training in the science of reading,
4 b. are knowledgeable of multitiered systems of support,
5 and
6 c. have been trained in the identification of and
7 ~~intervention for dyslexia and related disorders~~
8 ~~including best practice the use of appropriate~~
9 ~~interventions and treatment models for,~~
10 ~~accommodations, and teaching techniques for students~~
11 ~~with dysgraphia, dyslexia, a related reading disorder,~~
12 ~~or reading deficiency, and~~
13 d. have previously retired and were a highly effective
14 elementary school teacher based on student reading
15 scores on the statewide English language arts
16 assessment or teacher evaluations.

17 F. School Districts shall not deny access to the statewide
18 literacy team.

19 E. G. The State Department of Education shall electronically
20 submit a report to the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the
21 Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December
22 31, 2026, that includes an evaluation of the pilot program by school
23 districts, data on whether the program had an impact on increasing
24

1 the number of students who demonstrate proficiency in reading, and
2 recommendations for changes to the Strong Readers Act.

3 SECTION 7. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
4 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1210.508J of Title 70, unless
5 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

6 A. There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving
7 fund for the State Department of Education to be designated the
8 "Strong Readers Revolving Fund". The fund shall be a continuing
9 fund, not subject to fiscal year limitations, and shall consist of
10 all monies received by the State Department of Education from
11 private businesses, nonprofit organizations, and federally
12 recognized Indian tribes or nations. All monies accruing to the
13 credit of said fund are hereby appropriated and may be budgeted and
14 expended by the State Department of Education for the purpose of
15 improving reading outcomes in accordance with the Strong Readers
16 Act. Expenditures from said fund shall be made upon warrants issued
17 by the State Treasurer against claims filed as prescribed by law
18 with the Director of the Office of Management and Enterprise
19 Services for approval and payment.

20 B. Donors to the Strong Readers Revolving Fund shall designate
21 a specific school, school district, or region to receive their
22 donation. The State Department of Education shall distribute monies
23 from the Strong Readers Revolving Fund in strict compliance with
24 donor designations required by this subsection.

1 SECTION 8. This act shall become effective September 1, 2026.

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