COMMITTEE REPORT

March 25, 2014

**H. 3994**

Introduced by Reps. Patrick, Owens and Rivers

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Read the first time April 18, 2013.

**THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND PUBLIC WORKS**

To whom was referred a Bill (H. 3994) to amend the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, so as to enact the “South Carolina Read to Succeed Act” by adding Chapter 155 to Title 59, etc., respectfully

**REPORT:**

That they have duly and carefully considered the same and recommend that the same do pass with amendment:

Amend the bill, as and if amended, by deleting all after the enacting words and inserting:

/ SECTION 1. Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“CHAPTER 155

South Carolina Read to Succeed Act

Section 59‑155‑110. There is established within the Department of Education the South Carolina Read to Succeed Office to implement a comprehensive, systemic approach to reading which will ensure that:

(1) classroom teachers, use evidence‑based reading instruction in prekindergarten through grade twelve to include oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; administer and interpret valid and reliable assessments; analyze data to inform reading instruction; and provide evidence‑based interventions as needed so that all students develop proficiency with literacy skills and comprehension;

(2) classroom teachers periodically reassess their curriculum and instruction to determine if they are helping each student progress as a proficient reader and make modifications as appropriate;

(3) each student who cannot yet comprehend grade‑level texts identified and served as early as possible and at all stages of his or her educational process;

(4) each student receives targeted, effective comprehension support from the classroom teacher and, if needed, supplemental support from a reading interventionist so that ultimately all students can comprehend grade‑level texts;

(5) each student and his parent or guardian is continuously informed in writing of:

(a) the student’s reading proficiency needs, progress, and ability to comprehend and write grade‑level text;

(b) specific actions the classroom teacher and other reading professionals have taken and will take to help the student comprehend and write grade‑level texts; and

(c) specific actions that the parent or guardian can take to help the student comprehend grade‑level texts by providing access to books, assuring time for the student to read independently, reading to students, and talking with the student about books;

(6) classroom teachers receive preservice and in‑service coursework which prepares them to help all students comprehend grade‑level text;

(7) all students develop reading and writing proficiency to prepare them to graduate and to succeed in career and post‑secondary education; and

(8) each school district and each school develops and publishes annually a comprehensive research based reading plan that includes intervention options available to students and funding for these services.

Section 59‑155‑120. As used in this chapter:

(1) ‘Department’ means the State Department of Education.

(2) ‘Board’ means the State Board of Education.

(3) ‘Readiness assessment’ means assessments used to analyze students’ literacy, mathematical, physical, social, and emotional behavioral competencies in prekindergarten or kindergarten.

(4) ‘Research based formative assessment’ means assessments used within the school year to analyze the strengths and weaknesses in reading comprehension of students individually to adapt instruction to meet individual student needs, make decisions about appropriate intervention services, and inform placement and instructional planning for the next grade level.

(5) ‘Summative assessment’ means state approved assessments administered in grades three through eight and any statewide assessment used in grades nine through twelve to determine student mastery of grade level or content standards.

(6) ‘Discipline specific literacy’ means the ability to read, write, listen, and speak across various disciplines and content areas including, but not limited to, English/language arts, science, mathematics, social studies, physical education, health, the arts, and career and technology education.

(7) ‘Reading interventions’ means individual or group assistance in the classroom and supplemental support based on curricular and instructional decisions made by classroom teachers who have proven effectiveness in teaching reading and an add‑on literacy endorsement or reading/literacy coaches who meet the minimum qualifications established in guidelines published by the Department of Education.

(8) ‘Reading proficiency’ means the ability of students to meet state reading standards in kindergarten through grade twelve, demonstrated by readiness, formative or summative assessments.

(9) ‘Reading proficiency skills’ means the ability to understand how written language works at the word, sentence, paragraph, and text level and mastery of the skills, strategies, and oral and written language needed to comprehend grade appropriate texts.

(10) ‘Third grade reading proficiency’ means the ability to read grade‑level texts by the end of a student’s third grade year as demonstrated by the results of state approved assessments administered to third grade students, or through other assessments as noted in this chapter and adopted by the board.

(11) ‘Substantially fails to demonstrate third‑grade reading proficiency’ means a student who does not demonstrate reading proficiency at the end of the third grade as indicated by scoring at the lowest achievement level on the statewide summative reading assessment that equates to Not Met 1 on the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS).

(12) ‘Summer reading camp’ means an educational program offered in the summer by each local school district for students who are unable to comprehend grade‑level text.

(13) ‘Reading portfolio’ means an organized collection of evidence and assessments documenting that the student has demonstrated mastery of the state standards in reading equal to at least a level above the lowest achievement level on the state reading assessment.

(14) ‘Writing proficiency skills’ means the ability to communicate information, analysis, and persuasive points of view effectively in writing.

Section 59‑155‑130. The Read to Succeed Office must guide and support districts and collaborate with university teacher training programs to increase reading proficiency through the following functions including, but not limited to:

(1) providing professional development to teachers, school principals, and other administrative staff on reading and writing instruction and reading assessment that informs instruction;

(2) providing professional development to teachers, school principals, and other administrative staff on reading and writing in content areas;

(3) working collaboratively with institutions of higher learning offering courses in reading and writing and those institutions of higher education offering accredited master’s degrees in reading‑literacy to design coursework leading to a literacy teacher add‑on endorsement by the State;

(4) providing professional development in reading coaching for already certified literacy coaches and literacy teachers;

(5) developing information and resources that school districts can use to provide workshops for parents about how they can support their children as readers and writers;

(6) assisting school districts in the development and implementation of their district reading proficiency plans for research‑based reading instruction programs and to assist each of their schools to develop its own implementation plan aligned with the district and state plans;

(7) annually designing content and questions for and review and approve the reading proficiency plan of each district;

(8) monitor and report to the State Board of Education the yearly success rate of summer reading camps. Districts must provide statistical data to include the:

(a) number of students enrolled in camps;

(b) number of students by grade level who successfully complete the camps;

(c) number of third‑graders promoted to fourth grade;

(d) number of third‑graders retained; and

(e) total expenditure made on operating the camps by source of funds to include in‑kind donations; and

(9) provide an annual report to the General Assembly regarding the implementation of the South Carolina Read to Succeed Act and the State’s and districts’ progress toward ensuring that ninety‑five percent of all students are reading at grade level.

Section 59‑155‑140. (A)(1) The department, with approval by the State Board of Education, will develop, implement, evaluate, and continuously refine a comprehensive state plan to improve reading achievement in public schools. The State Reading Proficiency Plan must be approved by the board by February 1, 2015, and must include, but not be limited to, sections addressing the following components:

(a) reading process;

(b) professional development to increase teacher reading expertise;

(c) professional development to increase reading expertise and literacy leadership of principals and assistant principals;

(d) reading instruction;

(e) reading assessment;

(f) discipline specific literacy;

(g) writing proficiency skills;

(h) support for struggling readers;

(i) early childhood interventions;

(j) family support of literacy development;

(k) district guidance and support for reading proficiency;

(l) state guidance and support for reading proficiency;

(m) accountability; and

(n) urgency to improve reading proficiency.

(2) The plan must be based on reading research and proven effective practices, applied to the conditions prevailing in reading‑literacy education in this State, with special emphasis on addressing instructional and institutional deficiencies that can be remedied through faithful implementation of research‑based practices. The plan must provide standards, format, and guidance for districts to use to develop and annually update their plans as well as to present and explain the research based rationale for state level actions to be taken. The plan must be updated annually and must incorporate a state reading proficiency progress report.

(3) The plan must include specific details and explanations for all substantial uses of state, local, and federal funds promoting reading literacy and best judgment estimates of the cost of research supported, thoroughly analyzed proposals for initiation, expansion, or modification of major funding programs addressing reading and writing. Analyses of funding requirements must be prepared by the department for incorporation into the plan.

(B)(1) Beginning in Fiscal Year 2015‑2016, each district must prepare a comprehensive annual reading proficiency plan for prekindergarten through twelfth grade consistent with the plan by responding to questions and presenting specific information and data in a format specified by the Read to Succeed Office. Each district’s PK‑12 reading proficiency plan must present the rationale and details of its blueprint for action and support at the district, school, and classroom levels. Each district should develop a comprehensive plan for supporting the progress of students as readers and writers, monitoring the impact of its plan, and using data to make improvements and to inform its plan for the subsequent years. The model district plan piloted in school districts in 2013‑2014 and revised based on the input of districts will be used as the initial district reading plan template implemented in Fiscal Year 2015‑2016.

(2) Each district PK‑12 reading proficiency plan shall:

(a) document the reading and writing assessment and instruction planned for all prekindergarten through twelfth grade to be provided to all struggling readers who are not able to comprehend grade‑level texts. Supplemental instruction should be provided by teachers who have a literacy teacher add‑on endorsement or by reading/literacy coaches and offered during the school day and, as appropriate, before or after school in book clubs, through a summer reading camp, or both;

(b) include a system for helping parents understand how they can support the student as a reader at home;

(c) provide for the monitoring of reading achievement and growth at the classroom, school and district levels with decisions about intervention based on all available data.

(d) ensure that students are provided with wide selections of texts over a wide range of genres and written on a wide range of reading levels to match the reading levels of students;

(e) provide teacher training in reading and writing instruction; and

(f) include strategically planned and developed partnerships with county libraries, state and local arts organizations, volunteers, social organizations and school media specialists to promote reading.

(3)(a) The Read to Succeed Office shall develop the format for the plan and the deadline for districts to submit their plans to the office for approval. A school district that does not submit a plan or whose plan is not approved will receive no state funds for reading until it submits a plan that is approved. All district reading plans must be reviewed and approved by the Read to Succeed Office. The office will provide written comments to each district on its plan and to all districts on common issues raised in prior or newly submitted district reading plans.

(b) The Read to Succeed Office will monitor the district and school plans and use their findings to inform the training and support the office provides to districts and schools.

(c) The Read to Succeed Office may direct a district that is persistently unable to prepare an acceptable PK‑12 reading proficiency plan or to help all students comprehend grade‑level texts to enter into a multi district or contractual arrangement to develop an effective intervention plan.

(C) Each school must prepare an implementation plan aligned with the plan of its district to enable the district to monitor and support implementation at the school level. The school plan should be a component of the school’s strategic plan required by Section 59‑18‑1310. A school plan should be sufficiently detailed to provide practical guidance for classroom teachers. Proposed strategies for assessment, instruction, and other activities specified in the school plan must be sufficient to provide to classroom teachers and other instructional staff helpful guidance that can be related to the critical reading and writing needs of students in the school. In consultation with the School Improvement Council, each school must include in its plan the training and support that will be provided to parents as needed to maximize their promotion of reading and writing by students at home and in the community.

Section 59‑155‑150. (A) The State Board of Education shall ensure that every student entering the public schools for the first time in prekindergarten and kindergarten will be administered a readiness assessment by the forty‑fifth day of the school year. The assessment must assess each child’s early language and literacy development, mathematical thinking, physical wellbeing, and social emotional development. The assessment may include multiple assessments, all of which must be approved by the board. The approved assessments of academic readiness must be aligned with first and second grade standards for English language arts and mathematics. The purpose of the assessment is to provide teachers and parents or guardians with information to address the readiness needs of each student, especially by identifying language, cognitive, social, emotional, and health problems, and concerning appropriate instruction and support for each child. The results of the assessments and the developmental intervention strategies recommended to address the child’s identified needs must be provided, in writing, to the parent or guardian. Reading instructional strategies and developmental activities for children whose oral language skills are assessed to be below the norm for their peers in the State must be aligned with the district’s reading proficiency plan for addressing the readiness needs of each student. The results of each assessment also must be reported to the Read to Succeed Office through an electronic information system.

(B) Any student enrolled in prekindergarten, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade who is substantially not demonstrating proficiency in reading, based upon formal diagnostic assessments or through teacher observations, must be provided intensive in‑class and supplemental reading intervention and immediately upon determination. The intensive interventions must be provided as individualized and small group assistance based on the analysis of assessment data. All sustained interventions must be aligned with the district’s reading proficiency plan. These interventions must be at least thirty minutes in duration and be in addition to ninety minutes of daily reading and writing instruction provided to all students in kindergarten through grade three. The district must continue to provide intensive in class intervention and at least thirty minutes of supplemental intervention until the student can comprehend and write grade‑level text independently. In addition, the parent or guardian of the student must be notified in writing of the child’s inability to read grade‑level texts during and at the end of the planned interventions. The results of the initial assessments and progress monitoring also must be provided to the Read to Succeed Office for individually identified students.

(C) Programs that focus on early childhood literacy development in the State are required to promote:

(1) parent training and support for parent involvement in developing children’s literacy; and

(2) development of oral language, print awareness, and emergent writing; and are encouraged to promote community literacy including, but not limited to, primary health care providers, faith based organizations, county libraries, and service organizations.

(3) Districts that fail to provide reports on summer reading camps pursuant to Section 59‑15‑130(8) are ineligible to receive state funding for summer reading camps for the following fiscal year; however, districts must continue to operate summer reading camps as defined in this act.

Section 59‑155‑160. (A) Beginning with the 2017‑2018 school year, a student must be retained in the third grade if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency at the end of the third grade as indicated by scoring at the lowest achievement level on the state summative reading assessment that equates to Not Met 1 on the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS). A student may be exempt for good cause from the mandatory retention but shall continue to receive instructional support and services and reading intervention appropriate for their age and reading level. Good cause exemptions include students:

(1) with limited English proficiency and less than two years of instruction in English as a Second Language program;

(2) with disabilities whose individualized education plan indicates the use of alternative assessments or alternative reading interventions and students with disabilities whose individual education plan or Section 504 plan reflects that the student has received intensive remediation in reading for more than two years but still does not substantially demonstrate reading proficiency;

(3) who demonstrate third grade reading proficiency on an alternative assessment approved by the board and which teachers may administer following the administration of the state assessment of reading and after a student’s participation in a summer reading camp;

(4) who have received two years of reading intervention and were previously retained; and

(5) who through a reading portfolio document the student’s mastery of the state standards in reading equal to at least a level above the lowest achievement level on the state reading assessment. Such evidence must be an organized collection of the student’s mastery of the State’s English/language arts standards that are assessed by the Grade Three state reading assessment. The student portfolio must meet the following criteria:

(a) be selected by the student’s English/language arts teacher or summer reading camp instructor;

(b) be an accurate picture of the student’s ability and include only student work that has been independently produced in the classroom;

(c) include evidence that the benchmarks assessed by the Grade Three state reading assessment have been met. Evidence is to include multiple choice items and passages that are approximately sixty percent literary text and forty percent information text, and that are between one hundred and seven hundred words with an average of five hundred words. Such evidence could include chapter or unit tests from the district’s or school’s adopted core reading curriculum that are aligned with the State English/language arts standards or teacher‑prepared assessments;

(d) be an organized collection of evidence of the student’s mastery of the English/language arts state standards that are assessed by the Grade Three state reading assessment. For each benchmark, there must be at least three examples of mastery as demonstrated by a grade of seventy percent or above; and

(e) be signed by the teacher and the principal as an accurate assessment of the required reading skills.

(B) The superintendent of the local school district must determine whether a student in the district may be exempt from the mandatory retention by taking all of the following steps:

(1) The teacher of a student eligible for exemption must submit to the principal documentation on the proposed exemption and evidence that promotion of the student is appropriate. This evidence must be limited to the individual education program, alternative assessments or student reading portfolio. The Read to Succeed Office must provide districts with a standardized form to use in the process.

(2) The principal must review the documentation and determine whether the student should be promoted. If the principal determines the student should be promoted, the principal must submit a written recommendation for promotion to the district superintendent for final determination.

(3) The district superintendent’s acceptance or rejection of the recommendation must be in writing and a copy must be provided to the parent or guardian of the child.

(C) Students scoring at the lowest achievement level on the statewide summative reading assessment may enroll in a summer camp prior to being retained the following school year. Summer camps must be six to eight weeks long for four or five days each week and include at least four hours of instructional time daily. The camps must be taught by compensated teachers who have at least a Literacy Endorsement add‑on and who have demonstrated substantial success in helping students comprehend grade‑level texts. A parent or guardian of a student who does not substantially demonstrate proficiency in comprehending texts appropriate for his grade level must make the final decision regarding the student’s participation in the summer camp. A district may offer summer reading camps for students who are not exhibiting reading proficiency in prekindergarten through second grade. The district may charge fees based on a sliding scale pursuant to Section 59‑19‑90. Students who demonstrate third grade reading proficiency through an alternative assessment or student reading portfolio after completing the summer reading camp qualify for good cause exemptions specified in Section 59‑155‑160 and promotion to the fourth grade.

(D) Retained students must be provided intensive instructional services and supports including a minimum of ninety minutes of daily reading and writing instruction, supplemental instruction, and other strategies prescribed by the school district. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, instruction directly focused on improving the student’s individual reading proficiency skills through small group instruction, reduced teacher‑student ratios, more frequent student progress monitoring, tutoring or mentoring, transition classes containing students in multiple grade spans, and extended school day, week, or year reading support. The school must report to the Read to Succeed Office on the progress of students in the class at the end of the school year and at other times as required by the office based on the reading progression monitoring requirements of these students.

(E) If the student is not demonstrating third‑grade reading proficiency by the end of third grade, his parent or guardian must be notified in a timely manner and in writing, that the student will be retained unless exempted from mandatory retention for good cause. The parent or guardian may designate another person as an education advocate also to act on their behalf to receive notification and to assume the responsibility of promoting the reading success of the child. The written notification must include a description of the proposed reading interventions that will be provided to help the student comprehend grade‑level texts. The parent, guardian, or other education advocate must receive written reports at least monthly on the student’s progress towards being able to read grade‑level texts based upon the student’s classroom work, observations, tests, assessment, and other information. The parent, guardian, or other education advocate also must be provided with a plan for promoting reading at home, including participation in shared or guided reading workshops for the parent, guardian, or other family members. The parent or guardian of a retained student must be offered supplemental tutoring for the retained student in evidenced‑based services outside the instructional day.

(F) For students in grades four and above who are substantially not demonstrating reading proficiency, interventions will be provided in the classroom and supplementally by teachers with a Literacy Teacher add‑on endorsement or reading/literacy coaches. This supplemental support will be provided during the school day and, as appropriate, before or after school in book clubs or through a summer reading camp.

Section 59‑155‑170. (A) To help students develop and apply their reading and writing skills across the school day in all the academic disciplines, including, but not limited to, English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, career and technology education, and physical and health education, teachers of these content areas at all grade levels must focus on helping students comprehend print and non‑print texts authentic to the content area. The Read to Succeed Program is intended to institutionalize in public schools a comprehensive system to promote high achievement in the content areas described in this chapter through extensive reading and writing. Research‑based practices must be employed to promote comprehension skills through, but not limited to:

(1) vocabulary;

(2) connotation of words;

(3) connotations of words in context with adjoining or prior text;

(4) concepts from prior text;

(5) personal background knowledge;

(6) ability to interpret meaning through sentence structure features;

(7) questioning;

(8) visualization; and

(9) discussion of text with peers.

(B) These practices must be mastered by teachers through high quality training and addressed through well‑designed and effectively executed assessment and instruction implemented with fidelity to research‑based instructional practices presented in the state, district, and school reading plans. All teachers, administrators, and support staff must be trained adequately in reading comprehension in order to perform effectively their roles enabling each student to become proficient in content area reading and writing.

(C) During the 2014‑2015 school year, the Read to Succeed Office will establish a set of essential competencies that describe what certified teachers at the early childhood, elementary, middle, or secondary levels must know and be able to do so that all students can comprehend grade‑level texts. These competencies, developed collaboratively with faculty of higher education institutions and based on research and national standards, must then be incorporated into the coursework required by Section 59‑155‑180. The Read to Succeed Office, in collaboration with South Carolina Educational Television, shall provide professional development courses to ensure that educators have access to multiple avenues of receiving endorsements.

Section 59‑155‑180. (A) As a student progresses through school, reading comprehension in content areas such as science, mathematics, social studies, English/language arts, career and technology education, and the arts is critical to the student’s academic success. Therefore, to improve the academic success of all students in prekindergarten through twelfth grade, the State will strengthen its preservice and inservice teacher education programs.

(B)(1) Beginning with students entering a teacher education program in the fall semester of the 2016‑2017 school year, all pre‑service teacher education programs including Master of Arts in Teaching degree programs must require all candidates seeking certification at the early childhood or elementary level to complete a twelve‑credit hour sequence in literacy that includes a school‑based practicum and ensures that candidates grasp the theory, research and practices that support and guide the teaching of reading. The six components of the reading process that are comprehension, oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary will provide the focus for this sequence to ensure that all teacher candidates are skilled in diagnosing a child’s reading problems and are capable of providing effective intervention. All teacher preparation programs must be approved for licensure by the State Department of Education to ensure that all teacher education candidates possess the knowledge and skills to assist effectively all children in becoming proficient readers. The General Assembly is not mandating an increase in the number of credit hours required for teacher candidates, but is requiring that pre‑service teacher education programs prioritize its mission and resources so all early and elementary education teachers have the knowledge and skills to provide effective instruction in reading and numeracy to all students.

(2) Beginning with students entering a teacher education program in the fall semester of the 2016‑2017 school year, all pre‑service teacher education programs, including Master of Arts in Teaching degree programs, must require all candidates seeking certification at the middle or secondary level to complete a six‑credit hour sequence in literacy that includes a course in the foundations of literacy and a course in content‑area reading. All middle and secondary teacher preparation programs are to be approved by the Read to Succeed Office to ensure that all teacher candidates possess the necessary knowledge and skills to assist effectively all adolescents in becoming proficient readers.

(C)(1) To ensure that practicing professionals possess the knowledge and skills necessary to assist all children and adolescents in becoming proficient readers, multiple pathways are needed for developing this capacity.

(2)(a) Reading/literacy coaches employed in schools will serve as job‑embedded, stable resources for professional development through a school to foster improving in reading instruction and student reading achievement. Beginning in 2015‑2016 reading/literacy coaches are required to earn the add‑on certification within six years by taking the courses as required by the department for the add‑on endorsement. Reading/literacy coaches will support and provide initial and ongoing professional development to teachers based on an analysis of student assessment and the provision of differentiated instruction and intensive intervention. The reading/literacy coach will:

(i) model effective instructional strategies for teachers;

(ii) facilitate study groups;

(iii) train teachers in data analysis and using data to differentiate instruction; coaching and mentoring colleagues;

(iv) work with teachers to ensure that research‑based reading programs are implemented with fidelity; and

(v) help lead and support reading leadership teams.

(b) The reading coach must not be assigned a regular classroom teaching assignment, must not perform administrative functions that deter from the role of improving reading instruction and reading performance of students.

(3) Beginning in 2015‑2016, early childhood and elementary education certified classroom teachers, reading interventionists, and special education teachers who provide learning disability and speech services to students who need to improve substantially their low reading and writing proficiency skills are required to earn the literacy teacher add‑on endorsement within ten years of their most recent certification by taking at least two courses or six credit hours every five years, or the equivalent professional development hours as determined by the South Carolina Read to Succeed Office, consistent with existing recertification requirements. The courses leading to the endorsement must be approved by the State Board of Education and must include classes in foundations, assessment, content area reading and writing, instructional strategies, and an embedded or stand‑alone practicum. Whenever possible, these courses must be offered at a professional development rate which is lower than the certified teacher rate. Early childhood and elementary education certified classroom teachers, reading specialists, and special education teachers who provide learning disability and speech services to students who need to improve substantially their reading and writing proficiency and who already possess their add‑on reading teacher certification can take a content area reading course to obtain their literacy teacher add‑on endorsement. Teachers who have earned a masters degree or doctorate degree in reading, who have earned a literacy teacher add‑on endorsement, or who have completed an intensive, prolonged professional development program like Reading Recovery or another program that are approved by the State Board of Education in regulation are exempt from this requirement.

(4) Beginning in 2015‑2016, middle and secondary certified classroom teachers are required to take at least two courses or six credit hours, or the equivalent professional development hours as determined by the South Carolina Read to Succeed Office, to improve reading instruction within five years of their most recent certification. The courses must be approved by the State Board of Education and include courses leading to the literacy teacher add‑on endorsement. Coursework in reading must include a course in reading in the content areas. Whenever possible, these courses will be offered at a professional development rate which is lower than the certified teacher rate. Only certified teachers who have earned a masters degree or doctorate degree in reading, who have earned a literacy teacher add‑on endorsement, or who have completed an intensive, prolonged professional development program like Reading Recovery or another program as approved by the State Board of Education in regulation are exempt from this requirement.

(5) Beginning in 2015‑2016, principals and administrators who are responsible for reading instruction or intervention and school psychologists in a school district or school are required to take at least one course or three credit hours within five years of their most recent certification or the equivalent professional development hours as determined by the South Carolina Read to Succeed Office. The course or professional development must include information about reading processes, instruction, and assessment or content area literacy and must be approved by the Read to Succeed Office.

(6) Beginning in 2015‑2016, reading/literacy coaches are required to earn the add‑on certification within six years by taking the courses as required by the department for the add‑on.

Section 59‑155‑190. Local school districts are encouraged to create family school community partnerships that focus on increasing the volume of reading, in school and at home, during the year and at home and in the community over the summer. Schools and districts should partner with county libraries, community organizations, local arts organizations, faith‑based institutions, pediatric and family practice medical personnel, businesses, and other groups to provide volunteers, mentors, or tutors to assist with the provision of instructional supports, services, and books that enhance reading development and proficiency. A district shall include specific actions taken to accomplish the requirements of this section in its reading proficiency plan.

Section 59‑155‑200. The Read to Succeed Office and each school district must plan for and act decisively to engage the families of students as full participating partners in promoting the reading and writing habits and skills of their children. With support from the Read to Succeed Office, districts and individual schools shall provide families with helpful information about how they can support this progress. This family support must include providing time for their child to read as well as reading to the child. To ensure that all families have access to a considerable number and diverse range of books appealing to their children, schools should develop plans for enhancing home libraries and for accessing books from county libraries and school libraries and to inform families about their child’s ability to comprehend grade‑level texts and how to interpret information about reading that is sent home. The districts and schools shall help families learn about reading and writing through home visits, open houses, South Carolina ETV, video and audio tapes, websites, and school‑family events and collaborations that help link home and school. The information should enable family members to understand the reading and writing skills required for graduation and essential for success in a career.

Section 59‑155‑210. The board and department shall translate the statutory requirements for reading and writing specified in this act into standards, practices, and procedures for school districts, boards, and their employees and for other organizations as appropriate. In this effort they will solicit the advice of education stakeholders who have a deep understanding of reading as well as school boards, administrators, and others who play key roles in facilitating support for and implementation of effective reading instruction.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor and is subject to the availability of state funding. /

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

PHILLIP D. OWENS for Committee.

**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, SO AS TO ENACT THE “SOUTH CAROLINA READ TO SUCCEED ACT” BY ADDING CHAPTER 155 TO TITLE 59, TO ESTABLISH WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION THE SOUTH CAROLINA READ TO SUCCEED OFFICE TO IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE, SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO READING WITH SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES, TO PROVIDE OBLIGATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROGRAM, AND TO PROVIDE NECESSARY DEFINITIONS, AMONG OTHER THINGS.

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly finds that national research has documented that students unable to comprehend grade-appropriate text struggle in all their courses; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly finds that while reading typically has been assessed through standardized tests beginning in third grade, research has found that many struggling readers reach preschool or kindergarten with low oral language skills and limited print awareness. Once in school, they and other students fail to develop proficiency with reading and comprehension because of inadequate instruction and engaged practice; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly finds that research has also shown that students who have difficulty comprehending texts struggle academically in their content area courses but seldom receive effective instructional intervention during middle and high school to improve their reading comprehension. These are the students least likely to graduate; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly finds that one recent longitudinal study documented that students reading below grade level at the end of third grade were six times more likely to leave school without a high school diploma; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly finds that reading proficiency is a fundamental life skill vital for the educational and economic success of our citizens and State. In accordance with the ruling of the South Carolina Supreme Court that all students must be given “an opportunity to acquire the ability to read, write, and speak the English language,” we find that all students must be given high quality instruction and engage in ample time actually reading and writing in order to learn to read, comprehend, write, speak, listen and use language effectively across all content areas; and

Whereas, to guarantee that all students exhibit these abilities and behaviors, the State of South Carolina must implement a comprehensive and strategic approach to reading proficiency for students in prekindergarten through twelfth grade that begins when each student enters the public school system and continues until he or she graduates. Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“CHAPTER 155

South Carolina Read to Succeed Act

Section 59‑155‑110. There is established within the Department of Education the South Carolina Read to Succeed Office to implement a comprehensive, systemic approach to reading which will ensure that:

(1) classroom teachers, using text based assessment measures that inform curriculum and instruction, provide students access to diverse text and ample time to read those texts, develop curriculum and provide instruction which will ensure that all students can comprehend grade‑appropriate texts;

(2) classroom teachers periodically reassess their curriculum, instruction, and engagement of students based on assessment data with text to determine if they are helping each student progress as a proficient reader and a proficient writer and make modifications as appropriate;

(3) each student who cannot yet comprehend grade-appropriate texts is identified and served as early as possible and at all stages of his or her educational process;

(4) each student receives targeted, effective comprehension support from the classroom teacher and, if needed, supplemental support from a reading interventionist so that ultimately all students can comprehend grade-appropriate texts;

(5) each student reading significantly below grade level and his parent or guardian are continuously informed in writing of:

(a) the student’s reading proficiency needs, progress, and ability to comprehend and write grade‑appropriate text;

(b) specific actions the classroom teacher and other reading professionals have taken and will take to help the student comprehend and write grade‑appropriate texts; and

(c) specific actions that the parent or guardian can take to help the student comprehend and write grade-appropriate text by providing access to books, assuring time for the student to read independently, reading to students, and talking with student about books and their writing;

(6) classroom teachers receive preservice and in‑service coursework which prepares them to help all students comprehend grade-appropriate text;

(7) all students develop reading and writing proficiency to prepare them to graduate and to succeed in post‑secondary education and careers; and

(8) each school district and each school develops and publishes annually a comprehensive research based reading plan that includes intervention options available to students and funding for these services.

Section 59‑155‑120. As used in this chapter:

(1) ‘Department’ means the State Department of Education.

(2) ‘Board’ means the State Board of Education.

(3) ‘Readiness assessment’ means assessments used to analyze students’ literacy, mathematical, physical, social, and emotional behavioral competencies in prekindergarten or kindergarten.

(4) ‘Research based formative assessment’ means assessments used throughout the school year to analyze the strengths and weaknesses in reading skills and comprehension of each student in order to adapt instruction to meet individual student needs, make decisions about appropriate intervention services, and inform placement and instructional planning for the next grade level.

(5) ‘Summative assessment’ means state approved assessments administered in grades three through eight and any statewide assessment used in grades nine through twelve to determine student mastery of grade level content standards.

(6) ‘Content area reading’ means reading text across various disciplines and content areas including, but not limited to, English language arts, science, mathematics, social studies, and career and technology education.

(7) ‘Reading interventions’ means individual or group assistance in the classroom and supplemental support based on curricular and instructional decisions made by classroom teachers and by reading interventionists who have an add on literacy teacher endorsement. Teachers make these research based decisions when planning and carrying out whole group, small group, and one on one instruction.

(8) ‘Reading proficiency’ means the ability of students to meet state reading standards in kindergarten through grade twelve, demonstrated by readiness, formative or summative assessments.

(9) ‘Reading proficiency skills’ means the ability to understand how written language works at the word, sentence, paragraph, and text level and mastery of the skills, strategies, and oral and written language needed to comprehend grade-appropriate texts.

(10) ‘Third grade reading proficiency’ means the ability to read grade-appropriate texts by the end of a student’s third grade year as demonstrated by the results of state approved assessments administered to third grade students, or through other assessments as noted in this chapter and adopted by the board.

(11) ‘Writing proficiency skills’ means the ability to communicate information, analysis and persuasive points of view effectively in writing.

(12) ‘Substantially not demonstrating reading proficiency’ means reading at levels that are equal to or comparable to the level of Not Met 1 on the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS).

(13) ‘Summer reading camp’ means a reading program offered in the summer by each local school district for students who are substantially not demonstrating reading proficiency in grade‑appropriate text.

(14) ‘Reading portfolio’ means a compilation of independently produced student work and assessments selected by the student’s teacher and verified by the teacher and principal, as providing an accurate picture of the student’s ability to comprehend grade‑appropriate texts. The portfolio must constitute an organized collection of evidence of the student’s mastery of the state reading standards.

Section 59‑155‑130. (A) The Read to Succeed Office must guide and support districts and collaborate with university teacher training programs to increase reading proficiency through the following functions including, but not limited to:

(1) organizing and providing professional development to teachers, school principals, and other administrative staff on reading and writing instruction and reading assessment that informs instruction;

(2) organizing and providing professional development to teachers, school principals, and other administrative staff on reading and writing in content areas;

(3) working collaboratively with institutions of higher learning offering courses in reading and writing and those institutions of higher education offering accredited master’s degrees in reading and literacy to design coursework leading to a literacy coach and literacy teacher add‑on endorsement by the State;

(4) providing professional development in reading and writing coaching for already certified literacy coaches;

(5) developing information and resources that school districts can use to provide workshops for parents about how they can support their children as readers and writers;

(6) supporting school districts in the development and implementation of their district reading proficiency plans for research‑ based reading and writing instruction and in assisting each of their schools to develop its own implementation plan aligned with the district and state plans; and

(7) designing content and questions annually for district reading proficiency plans and reviewing and approving the reading proficiency plan submitted by each district.

(B)(1) The Reading Proficiency Expert Panel is created to assist the Read to Succeed Office as provided in this subsection.

(2) The panel must be composed of six individuals selected for having the highest expertise on reading instruction, with three teaching reading and writing in public or private institutions of higher education nominated by the Commission on Higher Education with recommendations from the school of education deans of their institutions and three educators selected by the Read to Succeed Office, including at least one administrator responsible for the district reading plan and literacy coaches or teachers with documented exceptional student reading success. Members of the panel serve terms of two years and may be appointed to successive terms. They may receive no compensation but may receive per diem and mileage as provided for boards and commissions. A vacancy in the panel must be filled in the manner of the original appointment.

(3) The Reading Proficiency Expert Panel shall:

(a) review, select and summarize for dissemination basic research on reading and writing growth, assessment, and instruction that will contribute to educators’ research‑based knowledge of reading, guide policy and practices, and thereby benefit students in South Carolina;

(b) advise and provide to the Read to Succeed Office technical assistance and written guidance for schools in improving reading instruction of students in preschool through grade twelve;

(c) review and comment, in writing, on the State Reading Proficiency Plan and district and school proficiency plans; and

(d) assist the Read to Succeed Office in gathering information from teachers, reading interventionists, reading coaches, university reading professors and the reading research literature about the effectiveness of efforts to achieve high levels of reading proficiency.

Section 59‑155‑140. (A)(1) The department, in consultation with the Reading Proficiency Expert Panel and with approval by the State Board of Education, will develop, implement, evaluate, and continuously refine a comprehensive state plan to improve reading achievement in public schools. The State Reading Proficiency Plan must be approved by the board by February 1, 2014, and must include, but not be limited to, sections addressing the following components:

(a) urgency to improve reading proficiency;

(b) reading process;

(c) professional development to increase teacher reading expertise;

(d) professional development to increase reading expertise and literacy leadership of principals, assistant principals, and district administrators;

(e) reading instruction;

(f) reading assessment;

(g) volume of reading;

(h) content area reading;

(i) support for struggling readers;

(j) early childhood literacy development;

(k) writing;

(l) family support of literacy development;

(m) district guidance and support for reading proficiency;

(n) state guidance and support for reading proficiency; and

(o) accountability of all students, parents and educators to improve reading proficiency.

(2) The plan must be based on reading research and proven effective practices, applied to the current conditions prevailing in reading and writing education in this State, with special emphasis on addressing instructional and institutional weaknesses that can be remedied through faithful implementation of research based practices designed to engage students fully and effectively in reading and writing text. The plan must provide standards, format, and guidance for districts to use to develop and annually update their plans as well as to present and explain the research based rationale for state level actions to be taken. The plan must be updated annually and must incorporate a state reading proficiency progress report.

(3) The plan must include specific details and explanations for all substantial uses of state, local, and federal funds promoting reading literacy and best judgment estimates of the cost of research supported, thoroughly analyzed proposals for initiation, expansion, or modification of major funding programs addressing reading and writing. Analyses of funding requirements must be prepared by the department in consultation with the South Carolina Reading Proficiency Expert Panel for incorporation into the plan.

(B)(1) Beginning in Fiscal Year 2014‑2015, each district must prepare a comprehensive annual reading proficiency plan for prekindergarten through twelfth grade consistent with the State Reading Plan by responding to questions and presenting specific information and data in a format specified by the Read to Succeed Office. The plan should be a component of the district’s strategic plan required by Section 59‑18‑1310. Each district’s PK‑12 reading proficiency plan must present the rationale and details of its blueprint for action and support at the district, school, and classroom levels. Each district should develop a comprehensive plan for supporting the progress of students as readers and writers, monitoring the impact of its plan, and using data to make improvements and to inform its plan for the subsequent years.

(2) Each district PK‑12 reading proficiency plan shall:

(a) present a data‑based analysis of student progress toward reading proficiency by appropriate grade spans;

(b) document the reading and writing assessment and instruction planned for all prekindergarten through grade twelve students and the interventions in preschool through grade twelve to be provided to struggling readers and writers who substantially are not demonstrating proficiency in comprehending and writing grade‑appropriate text;

(c) explain the district’s system for helping parents understand how they can support the student as a reader and writer at home;

(d) provide for the monitoring of reading and writing achievement and growth at the classroom, school and district levels with decisions about intervention based on all available data. Data‑based instructional decisions should be made through collaborative district and individual school data teams comprised of appropriate representatives of school administrators, classroom and interventionist teachers, curriculum coordinators, special education teachers, and other support staff;

(e) document the amount of time students spend reading and writing including:

(i) the amount of classroom time students spend engaged directly in reading;

(ii) the amount of time students spend reading outside of school during the school year, including before or after school in reading clubs, on homework, and through voluntary reading;

(iii) the amount of time students spend reading during the summer which prevents summer loss of reading proficiency;

(iv) the volume and types of writing compared with what is necessary for achievement of the State English language arts academic standards; and

(v) the volume of reading and writing across content areas including the time, frequency and duration;

(f) ensure that students are provided with wide selections of texts over a wide range of genres and written on a wide range of reading levels to match the reading levels of students;

(g) provide for teacher training in reading and writing instruction critical for implementing the district and school plans and thereby for the success of students in achieving reading proficiency; and

(h) include strategically planned and developed partnerships with county libraries, volunteers, social organizations and school media specialists to promote reading.

(3)(a) The Read to Succeed Office will develop the format for the plan and the deadline for districts to submit their plans to the office for its approval. A school district that does not submit a plan or whose plan is not approved will receive no state funds for reading until it submits a plan that is approved. All district reading plans must be reviewed and approved by the Read to Succeed Office. The office will provide written comments to each district on its plan and to all districts on common issues raised in prior or newly submitted district reading plans.

(b) The Read to Succeed Office will monitor the district and school plans and use their findings to inform the training and support the office provides to districts and schools.

(c) The Read to Succeed Office may direct a district that is persistently unable to prepare an acceptable PK‑12 reading proficiency plan or to help all students comprehend grade-appropriate texts to enter into a multidistrict or contractual arrangement to develop an effective reading proficiency plan.

(C) Each school must prepare an implementation plan aligned with the plan of its district to enable the district to monitor and support implementation at the school level. The school plan should be a component of the school’s strategic plan required by Section 59‑18‑1310. A school plan should be sufficiently detailed to provide practical guidance for classroom teachers. Proposed strategies for assessment, instruction, and other activities specified in the school plan must be sufficient to provide to classroom teachers and other instructional staff helpful guidance that can be related to the critical reading and writing needs of students in the school. In consultation with the School Improvement Council, each school must include in its plan the training and support that will be provided to parents as needed to maximize their promotion of reading and writing by students at home and in the community.

Section 59‑155‑150. (A) The State Board of Education shall ensure that every student entering the public schools for the first time in prekindergarten and kindergarten will be administered a readiness screening by the forty fifth day of the school year. The screening must assess each child’s early language and literacy development, mathematical thinking, physical well‑being, and social emotional development. The screening may include multiple assessments, all of which must be approved by the board. The approved assessments of academic readiness must be aligned with first and second grade standards for English language arts and mathematics. The purpose of the screenings is to provide teachers, administrators, and parents or guardians with information to address the readiness needs of each student, especially by identifying language, cognitive, social, emotional, and health needs, and providing appropriate instruction and support for each child. The results of the screenings and the developmental intervention strategies recommended to address the child’s identified needs must be provided, in writing, to the parent or guardian. Reading instructional strategies and developmental activities for children whose oral language and emergent literacy skills are assessed to be below the national standards for the same grade students must be aligned with the district’s reading proficiency plan for addressing the readiness needs of each student. The results of each screening also must be reported to the Read to Succeed Office through an electronic information system.

(B) Any PK‑3 student who is substantially not demonstrating proficiency in reading grade‑appropriate text, based upon formal diagnostic assessments or through teacher observations, must be provided thirty minutes daily of intensive in class and supplemental reading intervention upon determination. The intensive interventions must be provided as individualized and small group assistance based on the analysis of assessment data. All sustained interventions must be aligned with the district’s reading proficiency plan. These interventions must be in addition to the ninety minutes of daily uninterrupted reading and reading instruction provided to all students in kindergarten through grade three. The district must continue to provide intensive in class intervention and supplemental intervention until the student can comprehend and write grade-appropriate text independently. In addition, the parent or guardian of the student must be notified in writing that the child is substantially not yet able to read grade‑appropriate text and of the planned interventions. The results of the initial assessments and progress monitoring also must be provided to the Read to Succeed Office through an electronic student reading progress monitoring data system for individually identified child reading data which can be linked and compared over time to evaluate progress.

(C) At the end of prekindergarten, kindergarten, first grade, or second grade, students substantially not demonstrating proficiency in reading must be provided summer reading camps. A parent or guardian of a student who does not substantially demonstrate proficiency in comprehending texts appropriate for his grade level must make the final decision regarding the student’s participation in the summer camp. Summer camps must be six to eight weeks long for four or five days each week and include at least five and one‑half hours of instructional time daily. The camps must be taught by compensated teachers with a literacy teacher add‑on endorsement who have demonstrated substantial success in helping students comprehend grade‑appropriate texts.

(D) Programs that focus on early childhood literacy development in the State are required to promote:

(1) parent training and support for parent involvement in developing children’s literacy; and

(2) development of oral language, print awareness, phonemic awareness, and emergent writing. Early childhood literacy programs also are encouraged to promote the efforts of community literacy partners including, but not limited to, primary health care providers, faith based organizations, county libraries, and service organizations. Guidelines and training to support parents and community literacy organizations will be developed by the Read to Succeed Office.

Section 59‑155‑160. (A) If a student is substantially not demonstrating progress toward achieving third grade reading proficiency at the beginning of the third grade, his parent or guardian must be notified in writing that the student may be retained unless exempted from mandatory retention for good cause. Such notification must be provided not later than the beginning of the third grade and at the end of the first and second grading periods. The parent or guardian may designate another person as an education advocate to act on their behalf to receive notification and to assume the responsibility of promoting the reading success of the child. The written notification must include a description of the proposed reading interventions that will be provided to help the student comprehend grade-appropriate texts. The parent, guardian, or other education advocate must receive written reports at least monthly on the student’s progress towards being able to read grade-appropriate texts based upon the student’s classroom work, observations, tests, text‑based assessment, and other information. The parent, guardian, or education advocate also must be provided with a plan for promoting reading at home, including participation in shared or guided reading workshops for the parent, guardian, education advocate or other family members. Supplemental tutoring of the retained student must be offered to the parent or guardian to be provided by a teacher with a literacy teacher add‑on endorsement outside the instructional day.

(B) Beginning with the 2016‑2017 school year, a student must be retained in the third grade if the student fails substantially to demonstrate third grade reading proficiency at the end of the third grade. A student may be exempt for good cause from the mandatory retention but shall continue to receive instructional support and services and reading intervention appropriate for their age and reading level. Good cause exemptions include students:

(1) with limited English proficiency and less than two years of instruction in English as a Second Language program;

(2) with disabilities whose individualized education program indicates the use of alternative assessments or alternative reading interventions and students whose reading comprehension level is determined to match their low cognitive ability;

(3) who demonstrate third grade reading proficiency on an alternative assessment approved by the board and which teachers may administer following the administration of the state assessment of reading or after a student’s participating in a summer reading camp;

(4) who have received reading intervention and were previously retained; and

(5) who through a reading portfolio demonstrate third grade reading proficiency. Teachers may submit the student reading portfolio at the end of the school year or after a student’s participation in a summer reading camp. Guidelines and standards for the reading portfolio and review process will be established by the board.

(C) The superintendent of the local school district must determine whether a student in the district may be determined exempt from the mandatory retention through all of the following steps:

(1) The teacher of a student eligible for exemption must submit to the principal documentation on the proposed exemption and evidence that promotion of the student is appropriate based on the student’s academic record. This evidence must be limited to the student’s individual reading proficiency plan, individual education program, alternative assessments, or student reading portfolio.

(2) The principal must review the documentation and determine whether the student should be promoted. If the principal determines the student should be promoted, the principal must submit a written recommendation for promotion to the district superintendent for final determination.

(3) The district superintendent’s acceptance or rejection of the recommendation must be in writing and a copy must be provided to the parent or guardian of the child.

(4) The student’s non‑participation in summer camps may be an additional factor considered in the decision of the principal or superintendent.

(D) Students not substantially demonstrating third grade reading proficiency will have the opportunity to enroll in a summer camp prior to being retained the following school year. Students who demonstrate third grade reading proficiency through an alternative assessment or student reading portfolio after completing the summer reading camp must be promoted to the fourth grade.

(E) Retained students in third grade must be provided intensive instructional services and supports including a minimum of ninety minutes of daily, uninterrupted reading and reading instruction in the classroom and at least thirty minutes per day of supplemental reading support. The classroom and supplemental reading support may include, but are not limited to, instruction directly focused on improving the student’s individual reading proficiency skills through individual and small group instruction, reduced student‑teacher ratios, more frequent student progress monitoring, tutoring or mentoring, transition classes containing students in multiple grade spans, and extended school day, week, or year reading support. The school must report through the student reading progress monitoring data system to the Read to Succeed Office on the progress of retained at the end of the school year and at other times as required by the office based on the reading progress monitoring requirements of these students.

(F) For students in grades four and above who are substantially not demonstrating reading proficiency, interventions will be provided in the classroom and supplementally by teachers with a literacy teacher add‑on endorsement. This supplemental support will be provided during the school day and, as appropriate, before or after school in book clubs or through a summer reading camp.

Section 59‑155‑170. (A) Students develop and apply their reading and writing skills across the school day in all the content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, career and technology education, and physical and health education. Teachers at all grade levels but especially in middle and high school content area courses must focus on helping students comprehend content area texts. It is the intent of the Read to Succeed Act that a comprehensive system of instruction promoting high achievement in the content areas through extensive proficient reading and writing be institutionalized in public schools. In order for students to comprehend grade‑appropriate content ‑area texts, they need to be proficient readers able to understand the discipline‑specific features of the content‑area texts. To be proficient content‑area readers, students must focus on reading as meaning‑making rather than reading at the word level and must stop when something does not make sense and problem‑solve at the word, paragraph, chapter and text levels. They also need to know how to make sense of information which is new to them. To understand the discipline‑specific features of content‑area texts, students must understand how such texts are organized and how they should be read. To learn from content‑area texts, students must possess or access appropriate background knowledge about the content. Teachers must use research‑based practices which support students in all these areas.

(B) In consultation with the Reading Proficiency Expert Panel and with teachers and university professors from each of the content areas, the Read to Succeed Office will define the specific strategies, skills, and knowledge which students must master in order to become proficient in comprehending content‑area texts. The Read to Succeed Office will review the strategies, skills, and knowledge promoted in research and through high quality professional development training for content‑area teachers across all disciplines. Based on this review, the Read to Succeed Office must prescribe the strategies and skills expected in the content‑area reading training courses required for teachers and administrators as specified in Section 59‑155‑180. The student strategies, skills, and knowledge to be considered by the Read to Succeed Office in consultation with the Reading Proficiency Expert Panel and with content‑area teachers and professors should include, but not be limited to: vocabulary; connotation of words; connotations of words in context with adjoining or prior text; concepts from prior text; personal background knowledge; ability to interpret meaning through sentence structure features; questioning; visualization; discussion of text with peers; and rereading sentences, passages and chapters.

Section 59‑155‑180. (A) As a student progresses through school, reading comprehension in content areas such as science, mathematics, social studies, English language arts and career and technology education is critical to the student’s academic success. Therefore, to improve the academic success of all students in PK through grade 12, the State will strengthen its preservice and graduate‑level teacher education programs and enforce the add‑on certifications specified in subsections (B), (C), and (D).

(B) Beginning with the 2014‑2015 school year, all preservice teacher education programs must use a modified version of the Literacy: Reading/English Language Standards Second Edition as established by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and other such standards approved by the department to describe the expertise needed for newly certified teachers at all grade levels. Institutions of higher education in this State must meet the standards set forth by the International Reading Association for Preservice Reading Teacher Preparation Programs and must submit evidence to the Read to Succeed Office, to the Commission on Higher Education and to the Reading Proficiency Panel to assure that their programs meet the modified standards. The panel will subsequently make recommendations on the course content and practicum experiences that embody research‑based reading and writing standards to the Read to Succeed Office for the certification of educators’ preservice training and to the Commission on Higher Education for approval of preservice programs.

(C) A teacher who receives initial certification in early childhood education, elementary education, or special education after September 1, 2014, will have six years from the date of initial certification to earn a literacy teacher add‑on endorsement to maintain his certification. Teachers certified in special education who teach students with disabilities other than learning disabilities and speech in middle and high schools will meet the requirements in Section (D)(1)(b). The first required course may be offered at the preservice institution where the teacher was trained during the summer immediately following graduation. Subsequent courses may be offered by distance education at school sites or campuses of the institutions of higher education.

(D)(1) For teachers certified before September 1, 2014, beginning 2014‑2015, and annually thereafter, the in‑state institutions of higher education that offer a master’s in education program in reading literacy and are accredited by the International Reading Association/National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (IRA/NCATE) will be authorized to provide the following required research based coursework to equip these teachers with a strong understanding of the theory, research, and practices that support the teaching of reading. Teachers who in the past five years completed courses thoroughly covering the competencies required in the courses specified below may have these courses counted for the requirement, if approved by the Read to Succeed Office:

(a) for certified early childhood and elementary teachers, reading specialists, and those special education teachers who provide learning disability and speech services to students who need to improve substantially their low reading and writing proficiency: the required courses needed to obtain a literacy teacher add‑on endorsement;

(b) for certified middle and high school teachers: a course which provides information about reading process, instruction, and assessment and a course in content‑area literacy; and

(c) for PK‑8 administrators including principals, assistant principals, and curriculum specialists and any grade 9‑12 administrator and district office administrators with significant responsibility for content‑area reading and writing education: a course which provides information about reading process, instruction, and assessment and a course in content‑area literacy; and

(2) Teachers and administrators have twelve years to obtain the required add‑on endorsement and complete the course requirements required by this subsection. Credit for courses closely matching the course content specific by the Read to Succeed Office that were previously obtained from an accredited institution of higher education may be counted towards the add‑on endorsement or towards the two course requirement upon approval by their school district and by the Read to Succeed Office.

(3) For all non‑practicum courses, teachers and administrators will have the option, subject to availability, of taking web‑based courses or taking them at an institution of higher education. In addition, some districts may choose to collaborate with an institution of higher education and offer the courses on‑site in their districts. Practice would be offered at school sites and can involve children enrolled in after‑school programs or summer reading camps. The Read to Succeed Office will work with institutions of higher education individually or with consortia to provide, when possible, the courses at a professional development rate greater than at the certified teacher rate.

Section 59‑155‑190. Local school districts are encouraged to create family school community partnerships that focus on increasing the volume of reading, in school and at home, during the year and over the summer at home and in the community. Schools and districts should partner with county libraries, community organizations, faith‑based institutions, pediatric and family practice medical personnel, businesses, and other groups to provide volunteers, mentors, or tutors to assist with the provision of instructional supports, services, and books that enhance reading development and proficiency. A district shall include in its reading proficiency plan specific actions to be taken to accomplish the requirements of this section.

Section 59‑155‑200. The Read to Succeed Office and each school district must plan for and act decisively to engage the families of students as full participating partners in promoting the development of the reading and writing skills and habits of their children. With support from the Read to Succeed Office, districts and individual schools shall provide families with helpful information that they can understand about how children progress as readers and writers and how they can support this progress. This family support should include providing time for their child to read as well as reading to and with the child. To ensure that all families have access to a considerable number and diverse range of books appealing to their children, schools should develop plans for enhancing home libraries and for accessing books from county libraries and school libraries. Schools will also assist families to learn how to help their children succeed in reading proficiency and how to interpret information sent home about reading. The districts and schools will help families learn about reading and writing through home visits, open houses, South Carolina ETV, video and audio tapes, websites, parent‑teacher meetings, including individual graduation plans, and school‑family events and collaborations which help link home and school. The information should enable family members to understand the reading and writing skills essential for graduation and success in post‑secondary education and careers.

Section 59‑155‑210. The board and department shall translate the statutory requirements for reading and writing specified in this act into standards, practices, and procedures for school districts, boards, and their employees and for other organizations as appropriate. In this effort they will solicit the advice of the Reading Proficiency Expert Panel and other education stakeholders who have a deep understanding of reading and writing as well as school boards, administrators, and others who play key roles in facilitating support for and implementation of effective reading instruction.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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