

2022 -- H 7164

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- RHODE ISLAND CERTIFICATION STANDARDS BOARD  
(SEE TITLE 16 CHAPTER 97 - THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT)

Introduced By: Representatives O'Brien, Craven, Hawkins, McNamara, Corvese, Serpa,  
McEntee, Biah, Slater, and Ranglin-Vassell

Date Introduced: January 26, 2022

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-11.4-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-11.4 entitled "Rhode  
2 Island Certification Standards Board [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of  
3 Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-11.4-6. Right to read act.**

5 (a) This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Right to Read Act."

6 (b) No later than 2025, the following shall have proficient knowledge and skills to teach  
7 reading consistent with the best practices of scientific reading instruction and structured literacy  
8 instruction:

9 (1) A person who completes a state-approved educator preparation program; and

10 (2) A person seeking teacher licensure by reciprocity or by adding an endorsement.

11 In addition, no later than 2025, a person who completes a state-approved educator  
12 preparation program, other than a teacher of elementary education program, shall demonstrate an  
13 awareness of the best practices of scientific reading instruction and structured literacy instruction.

14 (c) Beginning no later than the 2024-2025 school year, each state-approved educator  
15 preparation program shall post on its website information describing its program to prepare teachers  
16 to teach reading with scientific reading instruction and structured literacy instruction; aligned with,  
17 but not limited to, the content measured by the stand-alone reading assessment adopted by the  
18 Rhode Island board of education act.

1 (d) Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, a public school district and an open-  
2 enrollment public charter school shall provide the following professional development in scientific  
3 reading instruction and structured literacy instruction:

4 (1) For teachers licensed at the elementary level, professional development for one of the  
5 prescribed pathways to obtaining a proficiency credential in knowledge and practices in scientific  
6 reading instruction and structured literacy instruction; and

7 (2) For teachers licensed at a level other than the elementary level, professional  
8 development for one of the prescribed pathways to obtaining an awareness credential in knowledge  
9 and practices in scientific reading instruction and structured literacy instruction.

10 (e) Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, a public school that does not provide the  
11 professional development pursuant to the provisions of subsection (d) shall:

12 (1) Be placed on probationary status; and

13 (2) Provide notice to parents that the public school district has not met the requirements of  
14 this section.

15 (f) By the beginning of the ~~2023-2024~~ 2025-2026 school year:

16 (1) All teachers employed in a teaching position that requires an elementary education (K-  
17 6) license or (K-12) license shall demonstrate proficiency in knowledge and practices of scientific  
18 reading and structured literacy instruction; and

19 (2) All other teachers shall demonstrate awareness in knowledge and practices of scientific  
20 reading instruction and structured literacy instruction.

21 (g) All teachers who begin employment in the ~~2023-2024~~ 2025-2026 school year and each  
22 school year thereafter shall demonstrate proficiency or awareness in knowledge and practices in  
23 scientific reading instruction and structured literacy instruction as is applicable to their teaching  
24 position by completing the prescribed proficiency or awareness in knowledge and practices of the  
25 scientific reading instruction credential and a structured literacy instruction credential either:

26 (1) As a condition of licensure; or

27 (2) Within one year if the teacher is:

28 (i) Already licensed; or

29 (ii) Employed under a waiver from licensure.

30 (h) A provider of a state-approved educator preparation program shall include in its annual  
31 report to the department of elementary and secondary education (the "department") a description  
32 of program to prepare educators to teach reading using scientific reading instruction and structured  
33 literacy instruction.

34 (i) A public school district that employs an educator in violation of this section or that does

1 not provide the professional development as required under this section shall be in violation of the  
2 standards for accreditation of the Rhode Island board of education act, and the school district may  
3 be placed on probationary status by the department. A public school district placed on probationary  
4 status pursuant to the provisions of this subsection shall send written notification to the parents of  
5 the students in the public school district of the reason for being placed on probationary status.

6 (j) A provider of a state-approved educator preparation program that does not comply with  
7 the requirements of this section may be subject to penalties up to and including having the  
8 provider's approval status revoked.

9 (k) The department is vested with the authority to, and shall enforce, this section.

10 (l) The department shall promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this section no  
11 later than August 1, 2022.

12 (1) The rules and regulations adopted by the department shall recognize that teachers shall  
13 have met the requirement of demonstrating awareness in knowledge and practices of scientific  
14 reading and structured literacy instruction by attending six (6) hours of training in scientific reading  
15 and structured literacy instruction.

16 (2) The rules and regulations adopted by the department shall recognize that teachers shall  
17 have met the requirement of demonstrating proficiency in knowledge and practices of scientific  
18 reading and structured literacy instruction by one of the following:

19 (i) Possessing a Master's degree in reading or a related academic discipline;

20 (ii) Possessing a reading specialist and/or consultant certificate;

21 (iii) Attending twenty-four (24) hours of training in scientific reading and structured  
22 literacy instruction;

23 (iv) Providing proof of completion of a course or training program in scientific reading  
24 instruction;

25 (v) Passing a test in scientific reading and structured literacy instruction adopted by the  
26 department; or

27 (vi) Having at least fifteen (15) years of experience teaching reading at the elementary  
28 level.

29 (m) As used in this section:

30 (1) The term "scientific reading instruction" means instruction that is instructional  
31 centered, empirically based, and further based on the study of the relationship between cognitive  
32 science and educational outcomes; and

33 (2) The term "structured literacy instruction" means an approach by which licensed  
34 personnel teach reading, which includes syllables, morphology, sound-symbol correspondence,

1 semantics, and syntax, in an explicit, systematic, and diagnostic manner.

2 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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RELATING TO EDUCATION -- RHODE ISLAND CERTIFICATION STANDARDS BOARD  
(SEE TITLE 16 CHAPTER 97 - THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT)

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1           This act would extend the time period from the school year 2023-2024 until 2025-2026 to  
2 require all teachers to demonstrate proficiency in knowledge and practices of scientific reading and  
3 structured literacy instruction. This act would further extend the time period from the school year  
4 2023-2024 until 2025-2026 requiring all new hires for a teaching position to demonstrate an  
5 awareness in knowledge and practices of the scientific reading instruction credential and a  
6 structured literacy instruction credential as a condition of hire, or within one year of hire, if already  
7 licensed. A teacher may demonstrate such knowledge and practice by: (1) Possessing a Master's  
8 degree in reading; (2) Possessing a reading specialist and/or consultant certificate; (3) Attending  
9 twenty-four (24) hours or more of training in scientific reading and structured literacy instruction;  
10 (4) Providing proof of completion of a course or training program in scientific reading instruction;  
11 (5) Passing a test in scientific readings and structured literacy instruction; or (6) Having a least  
12 fifteen (15) years of teaching experience at the elementary school level. The department shall issue  
13 rules and regulations in regards to this act no later than August 1, 2022.

14           This act would take effect upon passage.

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