

2019 -- S 1036

LC002944

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - RHODE ISLAND CERTIFICATIONS STANDARDS BOARD  
[SEE TITLE 16 CHAPTER 97 - THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT]

Introduced By: Senators Valverde, Goldin, and Pearson

Date Introduced: June 28, 2019

Referred To: Placed on Senate Calendar

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-11.4 of the General Laws entitled "Rhode Island Certification  
2 Standards Board [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby  
3 amended by adding thereto the following section:

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 (d) Beginning 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  
16 teachers to teach reading with scientific reading instruction and structured literacy instruction;  
17 aligned with, but not limited to, the content measured by the stand-alone reading assessment  
18 adopted by the Rhode Island board of education act.

1 (e) 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  
3 scientific 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  
9 knowledge and practices in scientific reading instruction and structured literacy instruction.

10 (f) 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) of this section shall:

12 (1) Be placed on probationary status; and

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

15 (g) By the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year:

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

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

21 (h) All teachers who begin employment in the 2023-2024 school year and each school  
22 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 (i) A provider of a state-approved educator preparation program shall include in its  
31 annual report to the department of elementary and secondary education (the "department") a  
32 description of program to prepare educators to teach reading using with scientific reading  
33 instruction and structured literacy instruction.

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

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

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

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

11 (m) The department shall promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this section.

12 (n) As used in this section:

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

16 (2) The term "structured literacy instruction" means an approach by which licensed  
17 personnel teach reading, which includes syllables, morphology, sound-symbol correspondence,  
18 semantics, and syntax in an explicit, systematic, and diagnostic manner.

19 SECTION 2. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended  
20 by adding thereto the following chapter:

21 CHAPTER 67.2

22 EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DYSLEXIA AND RELATED DISORDERS

23 **16-67.2-1. Teacher professional development and training.**

24 No later than September 1, 2021, the department of elementary and secondary education  
25 shall develop and make available on its website resources to assist school districts in developing a  
26 program to ensure all teachers and school administrators have access to materials to support  
27 professional awareness of best practices on:

28 (1) Recognition of the characteristics of dyslexia, related disorders, dyscalculia and  
29 dysgraphia; and

30 (2) Evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia, related disorders,  
31 dyscalculia and dysgraphia.

32 **16-67.2-2. Learning laboratory.**

33 (a) The department of elementary and secondary education (the "department") shall  
34 develop a collaborative learning laboratory (the "laboratory") to assist and promote training for

1 parents, guardians, caregivers, and teachers in:

2 (1) Recognition of the characteristics of dyslexia, related disorders, dyscalculia and  
3 dysgraphia; and

4 (2) Evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia, related disorders,  
5 dyscalculia and dysgraphia.

6 (b) In developing the laboratory, the department shall work with professionals and  
7 experts who have proven, data-driven models of success in teaching students with dyslexia. The  
8 department shall seek to foster partnerships among educators and practitioners from both the  
9 public and private teaching sectors, with the goal of ensuring that every student in this state who  
10 has dyslexia shall be appropriately and adequately screened, diagnosed, and provided therapy,  
11 instruction, and accommodations as needed.

12 **16-67.2-3. Department of elementary and secondary education responsibilities.**

13 (a) The department of elementary and secondary education (the "department") shall  
14 disseminate, using web-based technology, research-based best practice methods by which the  
15 state and district school boards and committees shall evaluate and improve the professional  
16 development system of teachers in regard to dyslexia.

17 (b) The department shall also disseminate, using web-based technology, professional  
18 development in the use of integrated digital instruction at schools that include middle grades.

19 **16-67.2-4. Dyslexia and related disorder education in teacher preparation programs.**

20 No later than the 2021-2022 school year, the department of elementary and secondary  
21 education (the "department") shall collaborate with the board of education to require that all  
22 department approved undergraduate educator preparation programs for licensure as a teacher of  
23 elementary education and as a reading specialist/consultant include instruction in:

24 (1) Dyslexia professional awareness of the characteristics of dyslexia and related  
25 disorders;

26 (2) Evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia and related disorders;  
27 and

28 (3) Completion of a classroom educator program providing instruction in the use of  
29 specific dyslexia and related disorder-targeted methods of teaching.

30 **16-67.2-5. Research commission.**

31 (a) No later than January 1, 2020, the general assembly shall form a joint study research  
32 commission (the "commission") consisting of nine (9) members to be appointed as follows: one  
33 with expertise in educating students with learning disabilities to be appointed by the speaker of  
34 the house; one with expertise in educating students with learning disabilities to be appointed by

1 the president of the senate; one with expertise in educating students with learning disabilities to  
2 be appointed by the governor; one member of the house of representatives, which shall be  
3 appointed by the speaker of the house; one member of the senate, which shall be appointed by the  
4 president of the senate; three (3) teachers with expertise in dyslexia to be appointed jointly by the  
5 speaker of the house and the president of the senate; and one parent of a student with dyslexia,  
6 which shall be appointed by the speaker of the house.

7 (b) The purpose of the commission shall be to study the possibility and feasibility of  
8 establishing two (2) schools, to be located on the University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island  
9 College campuses, which would be dedicated to the instruction of dyslexic children and the  
10 development of instructional techniques and professional development programs used to improve  
11 the instruction and identification of dyslexia and other learning disabilities.

12 (c) The commission shall be funded by the general assembly, and shall visit no fewer  
13 than four (4) schools dedicated to the education of dyslexic children, provided that if a school  
14 selected for visitation is greater than forty (40) miles away from the state of Rhode Island's  
15 capitol building, the visit may be conducted virtually.

16 (d) The commission shall render a report to the governor and to the general assembly  
17 prior to the commencement of the 2021 legislative session on the ways in which the department  
18 can enforce realistic goals pertaining to the increased availability of quality instruction for:

19 (1) Students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities; and

20 (2) Instructors, administrators, and special educators regarding dyslexia and other  
21 learning disabilities.

22 SECTION 3. 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 CERTIFICATIONS STANDARDS BOARD  
[SEE TITLE 16 CHAPTER 97 - THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT]

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1           This act would create the Right to Read Act to require certain licensed teachers to be  
2 proficient in scientific reading instruction and further require all other licensed teachers to have a  
3 cursory knowledge of scientific and structured literacy reading instruction. This act would also  
4 establish a new chapter addressing the education of children with dyslexia and related disorders.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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