



102ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2021 and 2022

SB3900

Introduced 1/21/2022, by Sen. Kimberly A. Lightford

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

See Index

Creates the Right to Read Act. Provides that the State Board of Education shall offer support: to each public school district to select evidence-based core reading instruction programs and implement them using structured literacy instruction; and to each early childhood, elementary, and special education teacher, reading specialist, literacy coach, and administrator to complete evidence-based training in teaching reading. Requires the State Board of Education to annually compile and post on its website information on the steps it has undertaken to support school districts to deliver high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction, including a list of any Early Literacy Grant recipients, documentation of how the recipient allocated the funding to support improved literacy, and what evidence-based literacy curricula the recipient is utilizing. Amends the School Code. In provisions concerning educator testing, requires applicants seeking specified licenses to pass a test in reading foundations, which shall include assessment of the applicant's understanding of phonological and phonemic awareness, concepts of print and the alphabetic principle, the role of phonics in promoting reading development, word analysis skills and strategies, vocabulary development, application of reading comprehension skills and strategies, and methods for assessing reading development. In provisions concerning minimum requirements for educators trained in other states or countries, provides that an applicant who has successfully completed a reading foundations test of at least comparable rigor to the Illinois reading foundations test is not required to complete a reading foundations test. Makes other changes. Effective immediately.

LRB102 24388 CMG 33622 b

STATE MANDATES
ACT MAY REQUIRE
REIMBURSEMENT

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Right
5 to Read Act.

6 Section 5. Legislative findings.

7 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

8 (1) the 2019 Illinois Assessment of Readiness found
9 that, among 3rd grade students, just 37% met or exceeded
10 learning standards in English language arts;

11 (2) the 2019 National Assessment of Educational
12 Progress similarly showed that just 35% of fourth grade
13 students in Illinois are proficient or advanced in English
14 language arts;

15 (3) research from the Annie E. Casey Institute found
16 that students who are not proficient readers in 3rd grade
17 are 4 times more likely not to finish high school, while
18 students from low-income families who are non-proficient
19 readers in 3rd grade are more than 6 times more likely not
20 to finish high school;

21 (4) the Literacy Project Foundation estimates that 60%
22 of all prison inmates are illiterate and 85% of juvenile
23 offenders struggle with reading;

1 (5) 20 states require elementary teacher candidates to
2 pass a licensure test that is well-grounded in the science
3 of reading and fully measures knowledge in reading
4 foundations for all elementary candidates yet Illinois
5 does not measure the competencies of the science of
6 reading in the current licensure exam;

7 (6) the Simple View of Reading states that reading
8 comprehension is the product of the words one can decode
9 (word recognition) and the language one understands
10 (language comprehension) and word recognition requires an
11 understanding of phonics and phonological awareness, while
12 language comprehension requires an understanding of
13 background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, and
14 verbal reasoning; and

15 (7) strengthening early literacy instruction and
16 supports for students in Illinois will pay dividends in
17 the future, empowering students by providing the skills
18 they will need to graduate, find fulfilling careers, and
19 be productive members of their communities and of our
20 democracy.

21 (b) The General Assembly further finds that:

22 (1) reading is a critical skill that every child must
23 develop early in the child's educational career to be
24 successful;

25 (2) research shows that direct, systematic,
26 cumulative, sequential, and explicit reading instruction

1 that is focused on the foundational reading skills of
2 phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary
3 development, reading fluency including oral skills, and
4 reading comprehension is highly effective in teaching
5 young children to read; and

6 (3) ensuring that every child has access to
7 high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction
8 implemented using a structured literacy approach is a
9 foundational component of Illinois' public education
10 system and a responsibility shared among federal, State,
11 and local education agencies.

12 Section 10. Definitions. In this Act:

13 "Board" means the State Board of Education.

14 "Cueing" means an instructional strategy in which students
15 are encouraged to infer what words say by looking at picture
16 clues or guessing or predicting words from repeated text
17 patterns or context, rather than encouraging them to decode
18 text as the primary method for recognizing a word while
19 reading.

20 "Evidence-based practice" refers to methodologies that
21 have been shown, through externally-validated research, to
22 effectuate positive educational results in a predictable
23 manner on a particular population. Evidence-based practices
24 meet a higher standard of evidence than research-based
25 practices.

1 "Explicit" refers to a specific, direct, intentional, and
2 highly-structured manner of presentation in which topics are
3 broken down into small parts and taught individually,
4 involving direct demonstration, guidance, and practice.

5 "MTSS" means a multi-tiered system of support, which is an
6 educational intervention system, focused on
7 continuous-improvement using data-based problem solving and
8 decision-making at all levels of the educational system.

9 "Phonemic awareness" means the ability to identify and
10 manipulate individual sounds in spoken words.

11 "Phonics" means a method that demonstrates relationships
12 between letters or groups of letters of the alphabet
13 (graphemes) and sounds of spoken language (phonemes).

14 "Phonological awareness" means the ability to identify and
15 manipulate the spoken word parts, including syllables and
16 individual sounds.

17 "Reading comprehension" means the ability to decode words
18 in printed text and accurately understand and interpret their
19 meaning, making connections and drawing conclusions from what
20 they read.

21 "Reading fluency" means the ability to read with
22 appropriate speed, automaticity, accuracy, and expression.

23 "Research-based practice" refers to methodologies
24 suspected to affect a desired change. "Research-based
25 practices" represent a lower standard of evidence when
26 compared to evidence-based practices.

1 "Structured literacy" is an approach to reading
2 instruction where teachers carefully structure important
3 literacy skills, concepts, and the sequence of instruction, to
4 facilitate children's literacy learning and progress.
5 "Structured literacy" is characterized by the provision of
6 systematic, explicit instruction that integrates listening,
7 speaking, reading, and writing and emphasizes the structure of
8 language across the speech sound system (phonology), the
9 writing system (orthography), the structure of sentences
10 (syntax), the meaningful parts of words (morphology), the
11 relationships among words (semantics), and the organization of
12 spoken and written discourse.

13 "Systematic" means an approach to content delivery that
14 builds sequentially upon prior learning in a strategic manner,
15 that is, building from simple to complex.

16 Section 15. Local education provider procedures, plan, and
17 training.

18 (a) The Board shall offer support to each public school
19 district to select evidence-based core reading instruction
20 programs and implement them using structured literacy
21 instruction. The curricula shall include phonemic awareness, a
22 systematic approach to phonics, explicit spelling instruction,
23 vocabulary development, reading fluency including oral skills,
24 and reading comprehension. Word recognition strategies shall
25 rely on orthographic and phonological processes rather than

1 cueing. The core reading instruction must include connected
2 text, such as texts intended to reinforce words with the
3 phonetic patterns previously taught in sequence. This support
4 shall include:

5 (1) creation of a specific set of criteria that core
6 curricula must meet, as well as a list of evidence-based
7 literacy core curricula based on the given criteria, with
8 dissemination of the list to school districts by February
9 1, 2023; and

10 (2) establishment of a pilot program to award Early
11 Literacy Grants to districts that commit to comprehensive
12 reform of core literacy curriculum and support for
13 teachers implementing instruction of the new material by
14 September 1, 2025. At a minimum, grantees of the program
15 must commit to:

16 (A) comprehensive professional development
17 ensuring that each teacher employed to teach kindergarten
18 or any of grades 1 through 3 and each administrator in an
19 elementary school successfully completes or has
20 successfully completed evidence-based training in teaching
21 reading; and

22 (B) adoption and implementation of core and
23 supplemental reading curricula at each grade level from
24 kindergarten through grade 2 that is designed around
25 teaching the foundational reading skills.

26 (b) The Board shall offer support to each early childhood,

1 elementary, and special education teacher, reading specialist,
2 literacy coach, and administrator to complete evidence-based
3 training in teaching reading. Such training shall focus on
4 systematic and explicit instruction in the areas of phonemic
5 awareness, phonics, orthography, morphology, vocabulary
6 development, reading fluency including oral skills, and
7 reading comprehension and include rigorous evaluations of
8 learning throughout and at the end of the course. This support
9 may include:

10 (1) development of a microcredential in the Science of
11 Reading to be affixed to professional educator licenses
12 upon completion of the required coursework, assessment, or
13 both;

14 (2) creation of an advisory list of rigorous
15 professional development programs related to structured
16 literacy and dissemination of the list to school districts
17 and regional offices of education;

18 (3) evaluation of current, pending, and future
19 professional development providers approved by the Board
20 pursuant to Section xx to ensure that training aligns with
21 evidence-based literacy instruction practices;

22 (4) completion of a review of current professional
23 development mandates required by federal or state law or
24 administrative rules and recommendations of requirements
25 that could be streamlined, eliminated, or modified to
26 accommodate more time for professional development in

1 literacy; and

2 (5) development of online training modules on
3 evidence-based literacy instruction available statewide to
4 districts and educators free of charge through December
5 31, 2026 and accepted for continuing professional
6 development units.

7 (c) The Board shall annually compile and post on its
8 website information on the steps it has undertaken to support
9 school districts to deliver high-quality, evidence-based
10 literacy instruction, including a list of any Early Literacy
11 Grant recipients, documentation of how the recipient allocated
12 the funding to support improved literacy, and what
13 evidence-based literacy curricula the recipient is utilizing.

14 Section 20. The School Code is amended by changing
15 Sections 21B-30 and 21B-35 as follows:

16 (105 ILCS 5/21B-30)

17 Sec. 21B-30. Educator testing.

18 (a) (Blank).

19 (b) The State Board of Education, in consultation with the
20 State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board, shall design
21 and implement a system of examinations, which shall be
22 required prior to the issuance of educator licenses. These
23 examinations and indicators must be based on national and
24 State professional teaching standards, as determined by the

1 State Board of Education, in consultation with the State
2 Educator Preparation and Licensure Board. The State Board of
3 Education may adopt such rules as may be necessary to
4 implement and administer this Section.

5 (c) (Blank).

6 (c-5) The State Board must adopt rules to implement a
7 paraprofessional competency test. This test would allow an
8 applicant seeking an Educator License with Stipulations with a
9 paraprofessional educator endorsement to obtain the
10 endorsement if he or she passes the test and meets the other
11 requirements of subparagraph (J) of paragraph (2) of Section
12 21B-20 other than the higher education requirements.

13 (d) All applicants seeking a State license shall be
14 required to pass a test of content area knowledge for each area
15 of endorsement for which there is an applicable test. There
16 shall be no exception to this requirement. No candidate shall
17 be allowed to student teach or serve as the teacher of record
18 until he or she has passed the applicable content area test.

19 (d-5) All applicants seeking a State license in the areas
20 of early childhood education, early childhood special
21 education, elementary education, English language arts, middle
22 grades language arts, reading specialist, reading teacher,
23 special education, speech language pathologist, and English
24 language learner teacher shall be required to pass a test in
25 reading foundations, which shall include assessment of the
26 applicant's understanding of phonological and phonemic

1 awareness, concepts of print and the alphabetic principle, the
2 role of phonics in promoting reading development, word
3 analysis skills and strategies, vocabulary development,
4 application of reading comprehension skills and strategies,
5 and methods for assessing reading development. The reading
6 foundations test must also assess applicants' knowledge of
7 assessment, differentiation, and intervention with respect to
8 each component of reading for English learners, students with
9 special needs, and students with advanced skills in some areas
10 of reading. There shall be no exception to this requirement.
11 No candidate shall be allowed to student teach or serve as the
12 teacher of record until he or she has passed the applicable
13 content area test

14 (e) (Blank).

15 (f) Except as otherwise provided in this Article,
16 beginning on September 1, 2015, all candidates completing
17 teacher preparation programs in this State and all candidates
18 subject to Section 21B-35 of this Code are required to pass a
19 teacher performance assessment approved by the State Board of
20 Education, in consultation with the State Educator Preparation
21 and Licensure Board. A candidate may not be required to submit
22 test materials by video submission. Subject to appropriation,
23 an individual who holds a Professional Educator License and is
24 employed for a minimum of one school year by a school district
25 designated as Tier 1 under Section 18-8.15 may, after
26 application to the State Board, receive from the State Board a

1 refund for any costs associated with completing the teacher
2 performance assessment under this subsection.

3 (g) The content area knowledge test and the teacher
4 performance assessment shall be the tests that from time to
5 time are designated by the State Board of Education, in
6 consultation with the State Educator Preparation and Licensure
7 Board, and may be tests prepared by an educational testing
8 organization or tests designed by the State Board of
9 Education, in consultation with the State Educator Preparation
10 and Licensure Board. The test of content area knowledge shall
11 assess content knowledge in a specific subject field. The
12 tests must be designed to be racially neutral to ensure that no
13 person taking the tests is discriminated against on the basis
14 of race, color, national origin, or other factors unrelated to
15 the person's ability to perform as a licensed employee. The
16 score required to pass the tests shall be fixed by the State
17 Board of Education, in consultation with the State Educator
18 Preparation and Licensure Board. The tests shall be
19 administered not fewer than 3 times a year at such time and
20 place as may be designated by the State Board of Education, in
21 consultation with the State Educator Preparation and Licensure
22 Board.

23 The State Board shall implement a test or tests to assess
24 the speaking, reading, writing, and grammar skills of
25 applicants for an endorsement or a license issued under
26 subdivision (G) of paragraph (2) of Section 21B-20 of this

1 Code in the English language and in the language of the
2 transitional bilingual education program requested by the
3 applicant.

4 (h) Except as provided in Section 34-6 of this Code, the
5 provisions of this Section shall apply equally in any school
6 district subject to Article 34 of this Code.

7 (i) The rules developed to implement and enforce the
8 testing requirements under this Section shall include without
9 limitation provisions governing test selection, test
10 validation and determination of a passing score for all tests
11 except the reading foundations test, administration of the
12 tests, frequency of administration, applicant fees, frequency
13 of applicants taking the tests, the years for which a score is
14 valid, and appropriate special accommodations. The State Board
15 of Education shall develop such rules as may be needed to
16 ensure uniformity from year to year in the level of difficulty
17 for each form of an assessment. The State Board shall base its
18 rules concerning the passing score of the reading foundations
19 test upon the results of a formal standard-setting process.

20 (Source: P.A. 101-81, eff. 7-12-19; 101-220, eff. 8-7-19;
21 101-594, eff. 12-5-19; 102-301, eff. 8-26-21.)

22 (105 ILCS 5/21B-35)

23 Sec. 21B-35. Minimum requirements for educators trained in
24 other states or countries.

25 (a) Any applicant who has not been entitled by an

1 Illinois-approved educator preparation program at an Illinois
2 institution of higher education applying for a Professional
3 Educator License endorsed in a teaching field or school
4 support personnel area must meet the following requirements:

5 (1) the applicant must:

6 (A) hold a comparable and valid educator license
7 or certificate, as defined by rule, with similar grade
8 level, reading foundations, and content area
9 credentials from another state, with the State Board
10 of Education having the authority to determine what
11 constitutes similar grade level and content area
12 credentials from another state;

13 (B) have a bachelor's degree from a regionally
14 accredited institution of higher education; and

15 (C) (blank); or

16 (2) the applicant must:

17 (A) have completed a state-approved program for
18 the licensure area sought, including coursework
19 concerning methods of instruction of the exceptional
20 child, methods of reading and reading in the content
21 area, and instructional strategies for English
22 learners;

23 (B) have a bachelor's degree from a regionally
24 accredited institution of higher education;

25 (C) have successfully met all Illinois examination
26 requirements, except that:

1 (i) (blank);

2 (ii) an applicant who has successfully
3 completed a test of content, as defined by rules,
4 at the time of initial licensure in another state
5 is not required to complete a test of content; ~~and~~

6 (iii) an applicant for a teaching endorsement
7 who has successfully completed an evidence-based
8 assessment of teacher effectiveness, as defined by
9 rules, at the time of initial licensure in another
10 state is not required to complete an
11 evidence-based assessment of teacher
12 effectiveness; and

13 (iv) an applicant who has successfully
14 completed a reading foundations test of at least
15 comparable rigor to the Illinois reading
16 foundations test is not required to complete a
17 reading foundations test; and

18 (D) for an applicant for a teaching endorsement,
19 have completed student teaching or an equivalent
20 experience or, for an applicant for a school service
21 personnel endorsement, have completed an internship or
22 an equivalent experience.

23 (b) In order to receive a Professional Educator License
24 endorsed in a teaching field or school support personnel area,
25 applicants trained in another country must meet all of the
26 following requirements:

1 (1) Have completed a comparable education program in
2 another country.

3 (2) Have had transcripts evaluated by an evaluation
4 service approved by the State Superintendent of Education.

5 (3) Have a degree comparable to a degree from a
6 regionally accredited institution of higher education.

7 (4) Have completed coursework aligned to standards
8 concerning methods of instruction of the exceptional
9 child, methods of reading and reading in the content area,
10 and instructional strategies for English learners.

11 (5) (Blank).

12 (6) (Blank).

13 (7) Have successfully met all State licensure
14 examination requirements. Applicants who have successfully
15 completed a test of content, as defined by rules, at the
16 time of initial licensure in another country shall not be
17 required to complete a test of content. Applicants for a
18 teaching endorsement who have successfully completed an
19 evidence-based assessment of teacher effectiveness, as
20 defined by rules, at the time of initial licensure in
21 another country shall not be required to complete an
22 evidence-based assessment of teacher effectiveness.
23 Applicants who have successfully completed a reading
24 foundations test of at least comparable rigor to the
25 Illinois reading foundations test shall not be required to
26 complete a reading foundations test.

1 (8) Have completed student teaching or an equivalent
2 experience.

3 (9) (Blank).

4 (b-5) All applicants who have not been entitled by an
5 Illinois-approved educator preparation program at an Illinois
6 institution of higher education and applicants trained in
7 another country applying for a Professional Educator License
8 endorsed for principal or superintendent must hold a master's
9 degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher
10 education and hold a comparable and valid educator license or
11 certificate with similar grade level and subject matter
12 credentials, with the State Board of Education having the
13 authority to determine what constitutes similar grade level
14 and subject matter credentials from another state, or must
15 meet all of the following requirements:

16 (1) Have completed an educator preparation program
17 approved by another state or comparable educator program
18 in another country leading to the receipt of a license or
19 certificate for the Illinois endorsement sought.

20 (2) Have successfully met all State licensure
21 examination requirements, as required by Section 21B-30 of
22 this Code. Applicants who have successfully completed a
23 test of content, as defined by rules, at the time of
24 initial licensure in another state or country shall not be
25 required to complete a test of content.

26 (2.5) Have completed an internship, as defined by

1 rule.

2 (3) (Blank).

3 (4) Have completed coursework aligned to standards
4 concerning methods of instruction of the exceptional
5 child, methods of reading and reading in the content area,
6 and instructional strategies for English learners.

7 (4.5) (Blank).

8 (5) Have completed a master's degree.

9 (6) Have successfully completed teaching, school
10 support, or administrative experience as defined by rule.

11 (b-7) All applicants who have not been entitled by an
12 Illinois-approved educator preparation program at an Illinois
13 institution of higher education applying for a Professional
14 Educator License endorsed for Director of Special Education
15 must hold a master's degree from a regionally accredited
16 institution of higher education and must hold a comparable and
17 valid educator license or certificate with similar grade level
18 and subject matter credentials, with the State Board of
19 Education having the authority to determine what constitutes
20 similar grade level and subject matter credentials from
21 another state, or must meet all of the following requirements:

22 (1) Have completed a master's degree.

23 (2) Have 2 years of full-time experience providing
24 special education services.

25 (3) Have successfully completed all examination
26 requirements, as required by Section 21B-30 of this Code.

1 Applicants who have successfully completed a test of
2 content, as identified by rules, at the time of initial
3 licensure in another state or country shall not be
4 required to complete a test of content.

5 (4) Have completed coursework aligned to standards
6 concerning methods of instruction of the exceptional
7 child, methods of reading and reading in the content area,
8 and instructional strategies for English learners.

9 (b-10) All applicants who have not been entitled by an
10 Illinois-approved educator preparation program at an Illinois
11 institution of higher education applying for a Professional
12 Educator License endorsed for chief school business official
13 must hold a master's degree from a regionally accredited
14 institution of higher education and must hold a comparable and
15 valid educator license or certificate with similar grade level
16 and subject matter credentials, with the State Board of
17 Education having the authority to determine what constitutes
18 similar grade level and subject matter credentials from
19 another state, or must meet all of the following requirements:

20 (1) Have completed a master's degree in school
21 business management, finance, or accounting.

22 (2) Have successfully completed an internship in
23 school business management or have 2 years of experience
24 as a school business administrator.

25 (3) Have successfully met all State examination
26 requirements, as required by Section 21B-30 of this Code.

1 Applicants who have successfully completed a test of
2 content, as identified by rules, at the time of initial
3 licensure in another state or country shall not be
4 required to complete a test of content.

5 (4) Have completed modules aligned to standards
6 concerning methods of instruction of the exceptional
7 child, methods of reading and reading in the content area,
8 and instructional strategies for English learners.

9 (c) The State Board of Education, in consultation with the
10 State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board, may adopt such
11 rules as may be necessary to implement this Section.

12 (Source: P.A. 101-220, eff. 8-7-19; 101-643, eff. 6-18-20;
13 102-539, eff. 8-20-21.)

14 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
15 becoming law.

1 INDEX

2 Statutes amended in order of appearance

3 New Act

4 105 ILCS 5/21B-30

5 105 ILCS 5/21B-35