

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1995

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SENATE BILL 1473

Short Title: Emphasize Reading.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senator Plexico.

Referred to: Appropriations.

June 3, 1996

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1
2 AN ACT TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A
3 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO IMPROVE READING ACHIEVEMENT IN THE
4 PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND TO REVISE THE STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY,
5 TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO COLLABORATE WITH
6 THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
7 AND WITH PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO EVALUATE AND
8 REVISE TEACHER CERTIFICATION STANDARDS AND TEACHER
9 EDUCATION PROGRAMS RELATED TO READING INSTRUCTION, TO
10 ENCOURAGE LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION TO REVIEW AND REVISE
11 THEIR POLICIES, CURRICULA, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
12 PROGRAMS TO EMPHASIZE BALANCED, INTEGRATED, AND EFFECTIVE
13 PROGRAMS OF READING INSTRUCTION, AND TO MAKE AN
14 APPROPRIATION.

Whereas, reading is the most important skill for lifelong learning and is essential for functioning as an active participant in a democratic society and as a productive worker in the workplace; and

Whereas, reading achievement in the United States in general and in North Carolina in particular has not been increasing enough to meet the needs of a complex democratic and technological society; and

Whereas, it is unacceptable to the General Assembly that illiteracy rates in North Carolina remain at a high level; and

Whereas, the information is now available for significantly improving the reading achievement of the students of North Carolina; and

Whereas, the first, essential step in the complex process of learning to read is the accurate pronunciation of written words; and

Whereas, knowledge of relationships of the symbols of the written language and the sounds of the spoken language (phonics) is the most reliable approach to arriving at the accurate pronunciation of a printed word; and

Whereas, all children will benefit from a balanced, integrated approach to reading that includes phonics, grammar, and comprehension in varying amounts according to the learning needs of the individual child; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. The State Board of Education shall develop a comprehensive plan to improve reading achievement in the public schools. The plan shall be fully integrated with State Board plans to improve student performance and promote local flexibility and efficiency. The plan shall be based on a thorough review of scientific research in reading and methodologies that have proven to be most effective in the teaching of reading. The plan shall be developed with the active involvement of teachers, college and university educators, parents of students, and other interested parties. The plan shall, if appropriate, include revision of the standard course of study, revision of teacher certification standards, and revision of teacher education program standards.

Sec. 2. The State Board of Education shall critically evaluate and revise the standard course of study so as to provide school units with guidance in the implementation of balanced, integrated, and effective programs of reading instruction. The General Assembly believes that the first, essential step in the complex process of learning to read is the accurate pronunciation of written words and that phonics, which is the knowledge of relationships of the symbols of the written language, is the most reliable approach to arriving at the accurate pronunciation of a printed word. Therefore, these programs shall include early and direct, intensive, systematic phonics instruction. The State Board shall provide opportunities for teachers, parents, and other interested parties to participate in this evaluation and revision.

Sec. 3. In order to reflect changes to the standard course of study and to emphasize balanced, integrated, and effective programs of reading instruction that include early and direct, intensive, systematic phonics instruction, the State Board of Education, in collaboration with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina and with the North Carolina Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, shall review, evaluate, and revise current teacher certification standards and teacher education programs within the institutions of higher education that provide coursework in reading instruction.

Sec. 4. Local boards of education are encouraged to review and revise existing board policies, local curricula, and programs of professional development in order to reflect changes to the standard course of study and to emphasize balanced, integrated, and

1 effective programs of reading instruction that include early and direct, intensive,
2 systematic phonics instruction.

3 Sec. 5. The State Board of Education shall report to the Joint Legislative
4 Education Oversight Committee by January 15, 1997, on the comprehensive plan
5 developed under Section 1 of this act, including revisions made to the standard course of
6 study, teacher certification standards, and teacher education programs, and including any
7 recommendations to the General Assembly. In addition, the State Board shall
8 disseminate to local boards of education by March 31, 1997, the changes to the standard
9 course of study.

10 Sec. 6. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the State Board of
11 Education the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) in the 1996-97 fiscal year to
12 implement this act.

13 Sec. 7. This act becomes effective July 1, 1996.