

LAWS OF DELAWARE  
VOLUME 83  
CHAPTER 80  
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
FORMERLY  
SENATE BILL NO. 133

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS.

WHEREAS, a strong literacy foundation is crucial for Delaware's children to succeed in school and in life;  
and

WHEREAS, research shows that students who are experiencing reading failure face social and emotional challenges, in addition to academic challenges, and are diagnosed with anxiety, depression, and other social, emotional, and mental health conditions at a rate that is 2 to 5 times greater than their peers; and

WHEREAS, research shows that the rapid growth of the brain and its response to instruction make the time from birth to age 8 a critical period for literacy development; and

WHEREAS, the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT Special Report, "Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters" references Yale University research which demonstrates that 3 out of 4 students who do not read well in third grade remain poor readers in high school; and

WHEREAS, research shows that while students thrive when given a strong reading foundation in early childhood, children who do not achieve sound reading skills at an early age fall behind their peers and the gap between good readers and those who struggle with reading continues to widen over time; and

WHEREAS, proficient 3rd grade readers were nearly 5 times more likely to graduate from high school than their peers with below-basic-reading skills and low reading skills are a stronger predictor that a student will not receive a diploma than spending at least 1 year in poverty; and

WHEREAS, a new Gallup study on behalf of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy found that low levels of adult literacy could be costing the U.S. as much \$2.2 trillion a year and that if literacy skills increase by 1% the economy could see a \$240 billion boost; and

WHEREAS, America's literacy crisis has been considered one of the great solvable problems of our time;  
and

WHEREAS, the 2019 Delaware Literacy Plan reported reading proficiency rates in Delaware have remained relatively flat since 2015 and some subgroups of students, including children from low-income families and those with disabilities, have experienced a decline in reading proficiency; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress, known as the Nation's Report Card, reported that in Delaware, 84% of black students are not proficient in reading by 4th grade, 78% of Hispanic students are not proficient in reading by 4th grade, and 83% of students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch are not proficient in reading by 4th grade, and

WHEREAS, advances in understanding how children learn to read has produced a body of research by linguists, psychologists, and cognitive scientists known as the “science of reading” which reflects a conclusion that effective beginning reading instruction has 6 essential components of reading literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, text comprehension, and oral language; and

WHEREAS, the American Federation of Teachers reports that it is possible to teach most students how to read if instructions starts early and follows the significant body of research showing which practices are most effective and that classroom teaching itself, when it includes a range of research-based components and practices, can prevent and mitigate reading difficulty; and

WHEREAS, existing teacher preparation programs do not necessarily encompass the “science of reading” which has caused a gap between what has been discovered about how children learn to read and how teachers are prepared to teach reading; and

WHEREAS, in order to advance Delaware students’ acquisition of reading literacy, which begins the lifelong intellectual process of gaining meaning by print, teacher preparation programs designed for prospective elementary school teachers, reading specialists, and special education teachers should lay the foundation for teachers to be able to effectively instruct students in the 6 essential components of literacy, as well as listening comprehension, learning content through reading, and scaffolding language through increased rigor.

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

Section 1. Amend § 1280, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 1280. Educator preparation program approval.

(c) Each educator preparation program approved by the Department shall incorporate all of the following:

(1) A clinical residency component, supervised by high quality educators, as defined by the Department. The clinical residency shall consist of at least 10 weeks of full-time student teaching. Clinical experiences shall also be interwoven throughout and aligned with program curriculum.

(2) Instruction for prospective elementary school teachers on ~~research-based strategies for childhood literacy and age-appropriate mathematics content;~~ content.

(3) Instruction for prospective elementary school teachers, early childhood teachers, special education teachers, and reading specialists must include a multi-componential instructional focus on all of following components of evidence-based reading instruction:

a. Language acquisition.

b. Literacy development.

c. Phonological processing.

d. Phonics and word recognition development.

e. Spelling.

f. Fluency and automaticity development.

- g. Vocabulary development.
- h. Text comprehension development.
- i. Assessment administration and interpretation.
- j. Letter formation.
- k. Orthographic processing.
- l. Morphological awareness.
- m. Structure of language.
- n. Language-based learning disabilities.
- o. Written expression.
- p. Interventions for struggling readers.

(4) Ongoing evaluation of students, consisting of no less than an annual evaluation, aligned to the statewide educator evaluation system, as set forth in § 1270 of this title.

(f)(1) The Department shall promulgate rules and regulations governing educator preparation programs pursuant to under this subchapter in collaboration with Delaware educators.

(2) The Department regulations must require a minimum number of hours of training or professional development that instructors in an educator preparation program must complete in evidence-based reading instruction under paragraph (c)(3) of this section, if providing literacy instruction for any of the following concentration or certification areas:

- a. Early childhood.
- b. Elementary.
- c. Special education.
- d. Reading specialists.

(g) An educator preparation program must maintain compliance with paragraphs (c)(3) and (f)(2) of this section beginning the first time the program is accredited after June 30, 2023.

Approved June 30, 2021