

Senate Engrossed

literacy endorsement; curricula; special education

State of Arizona
Senate
Fifty-seventh Legislature
First Regular Session
2025

SENATE BILL 1502

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTIONS 15-501.01 AND 15-704, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES; RELATING
TO READING INSTRUCTION.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Section 15-501.01, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended
3 to read:

4 15-501.01. Requirements for teachers; teaching certificates;
5 rules; reciprocity; placement; posting

6 A. Notwithstanding any other law, all teachers who are certificated
7 pursuant to this section must have a baccalaureate degree and a valid
8 fingerprint clearance card.

9 B. The state board of education shall adopt rules for the issuance
10 of the following types of certificates for teachers:

11 1. Standard teaching certificate.

12 2. Alternative teaching certificate for persons who obtain training
13 pursuant to subsection C, paragraph 1 of this section.

14 3. Subject-matter expert standard teaching certificate for persons
15 who obtain training pursuant to subsection C, paragraph 8 of this section.

16 4. Classroom-based standard teaching certificate for individuals
17 who obtain training from a school district or charter school.

18 5. Career and technical education teaching certificate.

19 C. The state board of education shall adopt rules to carry out the
20 purposes of this section. The rules:

21 1. Shall provide for a variety of alternative teacher and
22 administrator preparation programs that allow for variations in program
23 sequence and design to apply for program approval. The state board shall
24 adopt rules pursuant to this paragraph designed to allow for a variety of
25 formats and shall not require a prescribed answer or design from the
26 program provider in order to obtain approval from the state board. Any
27 rules adopted by the state board pursuant to this paragraph shall be
28 substantially different from the rules adopted for the approval of
29 traditional preparation programs and may not unnecessarily restrict a
30 variety of alternative preparation programs from operating and providing
31 instruction in this state. The state board shall evaluate each program
32 provider based on the program's ability to prepare teachers and
33 administrators and to recruit teachers and administrators with a variety
34 of experiences and talents. The state board shall allow universities
35 under the jurisdiction of the Arizona board of regents, community colleges
36 in this state, private postsecondary institutions licensed by this state,
37 school districts, charter schools, professional organizations, nonprofit
38 organizations and private entities to apply for program approval and shall
39 create application procedures and certification criteria that are
40 substantially less restrictive than those for traditional preparation
41 programs. At the completion of an alternative preparation program,
42 graduates shall:

43 (a) Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited postsecondary
44 education institution.

1 (b) If applicable, demonstrate professional knowledge and subject
2 knowledge proficiency pursuant to section 15-533.

3 (c) Obtain a valid fingerprint clearance card pursuant to section
4 15-534.

5 (d) If applicable, complete training in structured English
6 immersion as prescribed by the state board pursuant to section 15-756.09.

7 (e) If applicable, complete training in research-based systematic
8 phonics instruction as prescribed in paragraph 2 of this subsection.

9 (f) Demonstrate the required proficiency in the Constitutions of
10 the United States and Arizona as prescribed in section 15-532.

11 2. Shall require that, within three years after a certificate for
12 elementary education or early childhood education is issued, the
13 certificate holder complete, from a public or private provider, at least
14 forty-five classroom hours or three college-level credit hours, or the
15 equivalent, in both research-based:

16 (a) Science of reading instruction, including systematic phonics
17 instruction.

18 (b) Reading instruction, including training on assessments,
19 instructional practices and interventions to improve student reading
20 proficiency. ~~Beginning July 1, 2021,~~ Instruction provided pursuant to
21 this subdivision must meet the requirements for dyslexia training
22 prescribed in section 15-219.

23 3. Beginning August 1, 2025, shall establish a literacy endorsement
24 as a requirement for all certificated teachers who provide literacy
25 instruction in kindergarten programs or in any of grades one through five
26 as determined by the board. The rules shall require that a certificated
27 teacher who receives a certificate after August 1, 2025 and who provides
28 literacy instruction in kindergarten programs or in any of grades one
29 through five must obtain a literacy endorsement within three years after
30 the teacher's certificate is issued. The rules shall require that a
31 certificated teacher who received a certificate before August 1, 2025 and
32 who provides literacy instruction in kindergarten programs or in any of
33 grades one through five must obtain a literacy endorsement on or before
34 August 1, 2028. The literacy endorsement shall require the teacher to
35 complete evidence-based science of reading training or coursework as
36 determined by the board and to pass a literacy instruction assessment to
37 show that the teacher is capable of doing all of the following:

38 (a) Effectively teaching foundational reading skills, phonological
39 awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

40 (b) Implementing reading instruction using high-quality
41 instructional materials.

42 (c) Providing effective instruction and interventions for students
43 with reading deficiencies, including students with characteristics of
44 dyslexia.

1 4. ~~Beginning August 1, 2022,~~ Shall require all approved educator
2 preparation programs in elementary education, ~~and~~ early childhood
3 education AND MILD-MODERATE SPECIAL EDUCATION, AS DEFINED BY THE STATE
4 BOARD OF EDUCATION, to require the courses that are necessary to obtain a
5 literacy endorsement pursuant to paragraph 3 of this subsection.

6 5. Shall establish a process to allow a local education agency, at
7 the request of a teacher, to verify to the department of education that
8 the teacher possesses the instructional knowledge and skills prescribed in
9 paragraph 3 of this subsection, demonstrated through classroom
10 observations and student achievement data across subgroups using
11 evidence-based measures. A certificated teacher who has had a local
12 education agency verify the teacher's knowledge and skills in the science
13 of reading pursuant to this paragraph is not required to complete the
14 coursework, training or assessment requirements prescribed in paragraph 3
15 of this subsection to obtain the literacy endorsement.

16 6. Shall not require a teacher to obtain a master's degree or to
17 take any additional graduate courses as a condition of certification or
18 recertification.

19 7. Shall allow but shall not require the superintendent of a school
20 district to obtain certification from the state board of education.

21 8. Shall provide for the issuance of a subject-matter expert
22 standard teaching certificate to persons who have expertise in a content
23 area or a subject matter. Persons who are certified pursuant to this
24 paragraph shall complete training, if applicable, in structured English
25 immersion as prescribed by the state board pursuant to section 15-756.09.
26 Persons who are certified pursuant to this paragraph are exempt from the
27 subject knowledge proficiency requirements prescribed in section 15-533
28 and from the proficiency requirements prescribed in section 15-532 on the
29 Constitutions of the United States and Arizona. Persons who are subject
30 to subdivision (a) of this paragraph are also exempt from the professional
31 knowledge proficiency requirements pursuant to section 15-533. A person
32 who obtains a subject-matter expert standard teaching certificate pursuant
33 to this paragraph may provide instruction in the person's field of
34 expertise in grades six through twelve at any public school in this state.
35 Issuance of the subject-matter expert standard teaching certificate may
36 not be conditioned on the person's employment with a local education
37 agency. A person who meets the requirements of this paragraph shall be
38 issued a subject-matter expert standard teaching certificate without
39 having to demonstrate professional knowledge proficiency pursuant to
40 section 15-533, except that the person shall have at least two years to
41 demonstrate professional knowledge proficiency pursuant to section 15-533.
42 School districts shall evaluate and provide support pursuant to section
43 15-537 to teachers who are certified pursuant to this paragraph. If a
44 person fails to meet the professional knowledge requirements of this
45 section within two years, the department of education or state board of

1 education may temporarily suspend the subject-matter expert standard
2 teaching certificate. A certificate that is temporarily suspended
3 pursuant to this paragraph is not considered a disciplinary action, and a
4 person shall be allowed to correct the deficiency within the remaining
5 time of the subject-matter expert standard teaching certification. This
6 paragraph does not require a person who has obtained another type of
7 teaching certificate from the state board to obtain a subject-matter
8 expert standard teaching certificate pursuant to this paragraph in order
9 to provide instruction in grades six through twelve. Persons who are
10 certificated pursuant to this paragraph shall review and attest to
11 reviewing the best practices for social media and cellular telephone use
12 between students and school personnel adopted by the state board of
13 education pursuant to section 15-203, subsection A, paragraph 44 before
14 receiving a certificate and, within two years after receiving a
15 certificate, complete training in professionalism and ethics from a public
16 or private provider approved by the state board of education, which may
17 include a no-cost option to the person provided by the state board. A
18 person is eligible for a subject-matter expert standard teaching
19 certificate pursuant to this paragraph if the person has a baccalaureate
20 degree and meets any of the following requirements:

21 (a) Has taught courses relevant to a content area or subject matter
22 for the last two consecutive years and for a total of at least three years
23 at one or more regionally or nationally accredited public or private
24 postsecondary institutions. A person demonstrates compliance with this
25 requirement by providing the state board with written proof of employment
26 for specific durations from one or more qualifying postsecondary
27 institutions.

28 (b) Has either a baccalaureate degree, a master's degree or a
29 doctoral degree in a specific subject area that is relevant to a content
30 area or subject matter taught in public schools.

31 (c) Demonstrates expertise through relevant work experience of at
32 least five years in a field that is relevant to a content area or subject
33 matter taught in public schools. A person demonstrates compliance with
34 this requirement by providing the state board with written proof of
35 employment.

36 9. Notwithstanding section 15-533, shall exempt persons applying
37 for a secondary education certificate from the subject knowledge portion
38 of the proficiency examination if the state board determines that the
39 person has work experience in science, technology, engineering or
40 mathematics and can demonstrate adequate knowledge of a particular subject
41 through a postsecondary education degree or twenty-four credit hours of
42 relevant coursework.

43 10. Shall allow for a certificate issued to a person pursuant to
44 subsection B, paragraph 1, 3, 4 or 5 of this section or section 15-203 or
45 15-782.01, as applicable, to be both issued and renewed for at least

1 twelve years and may not require more than fifteen hours of continuing
2 education credits each year in order to renew that certificate pursuant to
3 this paragraph.

4 11. Shall allow for a certificate issued to a person pursuant to
5 subsection B of this section or section 15-132, 15-203 or 15-782.01, as
6 applicable, and any endorsement or approved area related to that
7 certificate, to be renewed at least two years but not more than ten years
8 after that certificate expires without any other requirements adopted by
9 the state board of education or the department of education if the person
10 is in good standing and possesses a valid fingerprint clearance card
11 issued pursuant to section 15-534. A certificate renewed pursuant to this
12 paragraph shall be identical to the expired certificate.

13 D. The rules for certification reciprocity shall include a
14 requirement that the applicant possess a comparable valid certification
15 from another state and be in good standing with that other state. An
16 applicant who possesses a valid certification from another state and a
17 fingerprint clearance card pursuant to section 15-534 and who is in good
18 standing with that other state shall be issued a comparable standard
19 certificate or a comparable certificate issued pursuant to section 15-132,
20 15-203 or 15-782.01, as applicable, without any other requirements from
21 the state board of education or the department of education. A person who
22 is issued a certificate pursuant to this subsection is not required to
23 meet any requirement prescribed in section 15-533.

24 E. Placement decisions of teaching intern certificate holders
25 issued pursuant to subsection C, paragraph 1 of this section and section
26 15-552 shall be based on agreements between the teacher preparation
27 provider, the provider's partner organizations and the local education
28 agency. The practices of the department of education and the rules and
29 policies of the state board of education may not restrict placement of
30 teaching intern certification holders based on local education agency
31 instructional models and may only consider the academic quality of the
32 school, the effectiveness of the teaching intern certification holder's
33 on-site mentor and the opportunity for a wide variety of schools and
34 school models to access teaching intern certification holders.

35 F. Notwithstanding subsection A of this section, the following
36 persons are not required to have a baccalaureate degree:

37 1. A teacher who is otherwise exempt by law from obtaining a
38 baccalaureate degree and who provides instruction in STEM or career and
39 technical education pursuant to section 15-782.01.

40 2. A person who obtains any of the following:

41 (a) A Native American language certificate.

42 (b) A student teaching intern certificate.

43 (c) A junior reserve officer training corps certificate.

44 (d) An athletic coaching certificate.

45 (e) An emergency substitute certificate.

1 G. On or before November 15 of each year, the department of
2 education shall report and post on its website all of the following:

3 1. The total number of teaching certificates issued in the previous
4 calendar year disaggregated by the type of teaching certificate and
5 demographics.

6 2. The total number of currently issued teaching certificates in
7 this state disaggregated by the type of teaching certificate and
8 demographics.

9 3. Any other historical data or trends regarding certificated
10 individuals in this state.

11 Sec. 2. Section 15-704, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to
12 read:

13 15-704. Reading proficiency; dyslexia screening plan;
14 parental notification; definitions

15 A. Each school district or charter school that provides instruction
16 in kindergarten programs and grades one through three shall select and
17 administer screening, ongoing diagnostic and classroom-based instructional
18 reading assessments, including a motivational assessment, to monitor
19 student progress. Each school shall use the diagnostic information to
20 plan evidence-based appropriate and effective instruction and
21 intervention.

22 B. The department of education shall develop a dyslexia screening
23 plan that meets all of the following requirements:

24 1. Ensures that within forty-five calendar days after the beginning
25 of each school year or within forty-five calendar days after a student
26 enrollment occurs after the first day of school, every student who is
27 enrolled in a kindergarten program or grade one in a public school in this
28 state is screened for indicators of dyslexia.

29 2. Provides guidance for notifications sent by public schools to
30 parents of students who are identified as having indicators of dyslexia
31 based on a screening for indicators.

32 3. Is developed collaboratively with the dyslexia specialist for
33 the department designated pursuant to section 15-211, and other experts on
34 dyslexia, including representatives in this state of an international
35 organization on dyslexia.

36 4. Ensures that screening for indicators of dyslexia includes the
37 following:

- 38 (a) Phonological and phonemic awareness.
- 39 (b) Rapid naming skills.
- 40 (c) Correspondence between sounds and letters.
- 41 (d) Nonsense word fluency.
- 42 (e) Sound symbol recognition.

43 C. The screening for indicators of dyslexia may be integrated with
44 reading proficiency screenings as prescribed in this section.

1 D. Each school district or charter school that provides instruction
2 for pupils in kindergarten programs and grades one through three shall
3 conduct a curriculum evaluation and adopt an evidence-based reading
4 curriculum that includes the essential components of reading instruction.
5 All school districts and charter schools that offer instruction in
6 kindergarten programs and grades one through three shall provide ongoing
7 teacher training based on evidence-based reading research. FOR THE
8 PURPOSES OF THIS SUBSECTION, "CURRICULUM" INCLUDES ANY CURRICULUM THAT IS
9 USED TO PROVIDE READING INSTRUCTION TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES OR
10 ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS.

11 E. Each school district or charter school that provides instruction
12 in kindergarten programs and grades one through three shall devote
13 reasonable amounts of time to explicit evidence-based instruction and
14 independent reading in grades one through three.

15 F. A pupil in grade three who does not demonstrate proficiency on
16 the reading standards measured by the statewide assessment administered
17 pursuant to section 15-741 shall be provided core reading instruction and
18 intensive, evidence-based reading instruction as defined by the state
19 board of education until the pupil meets these standards.

20 G. The governing board of each school district and the governing
21 body of each charter school shall determine the percentage of pupils at
22 each school in grade three who do not demonstrate proficiency on the
23 reading standards prescribed by the state board of education and measured
24 by the statewide assessment administered pursuant to section 15-741. If
25 more than twenty percent of students in grade three at either the
26 individual school level or at the school district level do not demonstrate
27 proficiency on the standards, the governing board or governing body shall
28 conduct a review of its reading program that includes curriculum and
29 professional development in light of current, evidence-based reading
30 research.

31 H. Based on the review required in subsection G of this section,
32 the governing board or governing body and the school principal of each
33 school that does not demonstrate proficiency on the reading standards, in
34 conjunction with school council members, if applicable, shall develop
35 methods of best practices for teaching reading based on essential
36 components of reading instruction and supported by evidence-based reading
37 research. These methods shall be adopted at a public meeting and shall be
38 implemented the following academic year.

39 I. Subsections G and H of this section shall be coordinated with
40 efforts to develop and implement an improvement plan if required pursuant
41 to section 15-241.02.

42 J. For the purposes of this section:

43 1. "Essential components of reading instruction" means explicit and
44 systematic instruction in the following:

45 (a) Phonological awareness, including phonemic awareness.

- 1 (b) Phonics encoding and decoding.
- 2 (c) Vocabulary development.
- 3 (d) Reading fluency as demonstrated by automatic reading of text.
- 4 (e) Reading comprehension of written text.
- 5 (f) Written and oral expression, including spelling and
- 6 handwriting.
- 7 2. "Evidence-based reading research" means research that
- 8 demonstrates either:
 - 9 (a) A statistically significant effect on improving student
 - 10 outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on either:
 - 11 (i) Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and
 - 12 well-implemented experimental study.
 - 13 (ii) Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and
 - 14 well-implemented quasi-experimental study.
 - 15 (iii) Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and
 - 16 well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for
 - 17 selection bias.
 - 18 (b) A rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive
 - 19 evaluation that an activity, strategy or intervention is likely to improve
 - 20 student outcomes or other relevant outcomes and that includes ongoing
 - 21 efforts to examine the effects of these activities, strategies or
 - 22 interventions.
- 23 3. "Reading" means a complex system of deriving meaning from
- 24 written text that requires all of the following:
 - 25 (a) The skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes or speech
 - 26 sounds are connected to written text.
 - 27 (b) The ability to decode unfamiliar words.
 - 28 (c) The ability to read fluently.
 - 29 (d) Sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster
 - 30 reading comprehension.
 - 31 (e) The development of appropriate active strategies to construct
 - 32 meaning from written text.
 - 33 (f) The development and maintenance of a motivation to read.