

SENATE BILL 2181

By Haile

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to literacy.

WHEREAS, alarmingly low rates of reading proficiency have hampered the educational and career prospects of Tennessee students; and

WHEREAS, the persistence of these substandard outcomes has undermined the economic advancement of Tennessee as well as triggered a succession of costly and unsuccessful reform initiatives; and

WHEREAS, recent reports have identified inadequate teacher training as a prime barrier to improved literacy instruction; and

WHEREAS, substandard performance by improperly trained new teachers has resulted in below-average student achievement growth for thousands of students in kindergarten through grade twelve annually; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee and other states have legislated teacher preparation reforms that aim to correct flawed training in reading instruction; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's educator preparation providers, accreditors, regulators, and oversight bodies have had little success in improving the effectiveness of teacher preparation; now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-5-5619(b), is amended by designating the existing language as subdivision (1) and adding the following:

(2)

(A) By August 1, 2024, and by each August 1 thereafter, the department, in consultation with the state board, shall annually report to the education committees of the senate and house of representatives the number and percentage of persons licensed to teach students in kindergarten through grade three (K-3) who are employed in Tennessee schools; trained under this section; and who earned, for the immediately preceding school year, an individual growth score, pursuant to § 49-1-302(d)(2)(B)(xi) or an equivalent measure of student growth as determined by the state board, of "significantly above expectations," "above expectations," "at expectations," "below expectations," and "significantly below expectations." The department shall publish the report on the department's website.

(B) The report required by subdivision (b)(2)(A) must include the following information in both a graphic and tabular format:

(i) The numbers and percentages calculated pursuant to subdivision (b)(2)(A) for each of the three (3) most recent years of growth scores, aggregated by year and educator preparation provider;

(ii) The annual percentage by which each educator preparation provider is expected to reduce the percentage of persons licensed to teach students in kindergarten through grade three (K-3) who are employed in Tennessee schools; trained under this section; and who earned, for the immediately preceding school year, an individual growth score of "below expectations," or "significantly below expectations," as determined by the department;

(iii) How the number and percentage of persons licensed to teach students in kindergarten through grade three (K-3) who are employed in a

Tennessee school; trained under this section; and who earned, for the immediately preceding school year, an individual growth score of "below expectations" or "significantly below expectations" change over time, aggregated by year and educator preparation provider;

(iv) A comparison of the changes in percentages of individual growth scores described in subdivision (b)(2)(B)(iii) with the expected reductions in the percentage of licensed teachers described in subdivision (b)(2)(B)(ii), with the educator preparation providers ranked in the order of their success in reaching the expected reductions; and

(v) Semester-by-semester letter grade distributions for all professional education courses taken by persons licensed to teach students in kindergarten through grade three (K-3) who are employed in a Tennessee school and trained under this section, aggregated by course by semester and by educator preparation provider.

(C) Effective August 1, 2023, the state board of education shall revoke an educator program provider's approval if the educator preparation provider fails to reach or exceed the expected annual reduction in the percentage of program completers scoring "below expectations" or "significantly below expectations," as described in subdivision (b)(2)(B)(iii). An educator preparation provider may regain state approval if the provider successfully implements program improvements approved by the department of education.

(D) The state board of education may promulgate rules as necessary to effectuate the requirements of subdivisions (b)(2)(A) and (B).

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.