

1 HB270
2 203018-1
3 By Representative Sells
4 RFD: Education Policy
5 First Read: 18-FEB-20

SYNOPSIS: Under existing law, cursive writing is required to be taught in the public elementary schools.

This bill would require each public school senior to legibly print and sign his or her own name in cursive writing as a requirement for graduation from high school.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

To amend Section 16-6B-2, Code of Alabama 1975, to require each public school senior to legibly print and sign his or her own name in cursive writing as a requirement for graduation from high school.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Section 16-6B-2 of the Code of Alabama 1975, is amended to read as follows:

"§16-6B-2.

1 "Every Alabama student shall be given instruction in
2 grades kindergarten through ~~twelve~~ 12 to prepare him or her to
3 enter the world of work ~~and/or~~ or to complete course work at
4 the postsecondary level, or both. In addition to a
5 comprehensive core curriculum of academics, each local board
6 of education shall offer a program of vocational/technical
7 education.

8 "(a) The following words and phrases used in this
9 section ~~shall~~, in the absence of a clear implication
10 otherwise, shall be given the following respective
11 interpretations:

12 "(1) REQUIRED COURSES. Courses which are required to
13 be taken by every student enrolled in public schools in the
14 State of Alabama.

15 "(2) ELECTIVE COURSES. Courses which are neither
16 mandatory nor required to be taken by any student enrolled in
17 public schools in the State of Alabama.

18 "(b) The Legislature finds that students must become
19 more literate in the basic skills needed to earn a living or
20 to continue their education. The Legislature further finds
21 that the English language is a common bond that holds our
22 society together. It is necessary that the State Board of
23 Education adopt curriculum policies to ensure that Alabama
24 students have a command of the spoken and written English
25 language. The Legislature further finds that in Alabama
26 schools, students earning a standard high school diploma are
27 only required to earn two credits of mathematics after they

1 enter the ninth grade prior to graduation. The Legislature
2 further finds that special attention must be given to the
3 Alabama courses of study. The State Board of Education shall
4 establish a rigorous and meaningful core curriculum including,
5 but not limited to, all of the following courses for grades
6 nine through ~~twelve~~ 12 in public schools to be phased in
7 beginning with students entering ninth grade in the 1996-97
8 scholastic year:

9 "(1) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
10 English.

11 "(2) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
12 mathematics, including, but not limited to, material designed
13 to ensure that no high school student fails to learn basic
14 mathematical skills and computer literacy.

15 "(3) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
16 science.

17 "(4) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
18 social studies with an emphasis on history, music history,
19 fine arts history, geography, economics, and political
20 science. History courses shall include material on the history
21 of the United States and the Constitution of the United
22 States. The Legislature further requires that the curriculum
23 content of American history shall include the teaching of
24 important historical documents including the Constitution of
25 the United States, The Declaration of Independence, The
26 Emancipation Proclamation, The Federalist Papers, and other

1 such documents important to the history and heritage of the
2 United States.

3 "(c) It is the intent of the Legislature that credit
4 for required basic core academic courses may be earned in
5 conjunction with vocational courses ~~and/or~~ or programs, or
6 both. It is the intent of the Legislature that local boards of
7 education offer and schedule students into vocational
8 programs.

9 "(d) It is the intent of the Legislature that, in
10 addition to the required courses, elective courses including,
11 but not limited to, foreign languages, fine arts, physical
12 education, wellness education, and vocational and technical
13 preparation be available to all students as determined by the
14 local board of education. For purposes of this section,
15 American Sign Language is a foreign language; a public school
16 may offer such a course; and a student who successfully
17 completes the course is entitled to receive credit for the
18 course toward satisfaction of a foreign language requirement,
19 pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the Alabama State
20 Board of Education. Beginning with the 2005-2006 school year,
21 the preceding sentence shall apply to hearing-impaired
22 students; and beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, and
23 each school year thereafter, the preceding sentence shall
24 apply to all students. Nothing in this chapter shall be
25 construed to diminish the current requirements of the State
26 Board of Education with respect to health and physical

1 education instruction in grades K-12 or to reduce the effect
2 of Section 16-40-1 regarding health and physical education.

3 "(e) The State Board of Education shall adopt
4 necessary policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and
5 standards to require that:

6 "(1) The required courses set forth in this section
7 shall be taken by every student enrolled in grades nine
8 through ~~twelve~~ 12 of public schools to be phased in beginning
9 with students entering the ninth grade in the 1996-97
10 scholastic year. The State Superintendent of Education after a
11 hearing in which he or she determines there exists just cause
12 may grant a one-time delay of one year for a school system
13 from implementation of any one of the required courses.

14 "(2) The required courses set forth in this section
15 shall be successfully passed by a student enrolled in grades
16 nine through ~~twelve~~ 12 of public schools prior to such
17 student's graduation or receipt of a diploma, phased in
18 beginning with students entering the ninth grade in the
19 1996-97 scholastic year. Students identified as eligible for
20 special education services as provided by federal and state
21 law shall be required to meet the provisions set forth in the
22 individual education plan prescribed to meet their individual
23 needs as required by law. The State Board of Education shall
24 continue to set graduation requirements; however, such
25 graduation requirements shall not provide less in the way of
26 requirements in the areas of English, math, science, and
27 social studies as provided in this chapter.

1 "(3) In addition to the required courses, a number
2 of elective courses shall be successfully passed by a student
3 enrolled in grades nine through ~~twelve~~ 12 of public schools
4 prior to such student's graduation or receipt of a diploma,
5 phased in beginning with students entering the ninth grade in
6 the 1996-97 scholastic year. The State Board of Education
7 shall determine the number and classification of units of
8 credit required for high school graduation.

9 "(f) The State Board of Education, on the
10 recommendation of the State Superintendent of Education, shall
11 prescribe the minimum contents of courses of study for all
12 public elementary and high schools in the state. In every
13 elementary school there shall be taught at least reading
14 including phonics, spelling, handwriting, arithmetic, oral and
15 written English, geography, history of the United States and
16 Alabama, elementary science, hygiene and sanitation, physical
17 education, the arts, including musical and visual arts,
18 environmental protection, and such other studies as may be
19 prescribed by the local board of education. Instruction in
20 handwriting shall include cursive writing so that students are
21 able to create readable documents through legible cursive
22 handwriting by the end of the third grade and to legibly print
23 and sign their own names in cursive as a requirement for
24 graduation from high school. Moreover, the State Board of
25 Education shall require the following courses for grades one
26 through eight in all public schools to be phased in beginning
27 with students entering grades one through eight in the 1995-96

1 scholastic year: English, social studies, mathematics, and
2 science shall be taught each year in grades one through eight.
3 English shall include, but not be limited to, material
4 designed to develop language arts, such as reading, writing,
5 speaking, and listening skills. Social studies shall emphasize
6 geography and history of the United States and Alabama.

7 "(g) The State Board of Education shall adopt
8 necessary policies, procedures, rules, regulations, ~~and/or~~ or
9 standards to require college and university departments of
10 education to review their existing educational programs for
11 all prospective teachers in order to ensure that they are
12 properly prepared to teach the courses required by law.

13 "(h) The State Board of Education and all local
14 boards shall develop and implement within ~~ninety (90)~~ 90 days
15 of July 7, 1995, a comprehensive character education program
16 for all grades to consist of not less than ~~ten~~ 10 minutes
17 instruction per day focusing upon the students' development of
18 the following character traits: Courage, patriotism,
19 citizenship, honesty, fairness, respect for others, kindness,
20 cooperation, self-respect, self-control, courtesy, compassion,
21 tolerance, diligence, generosity, punctuality, cleanliness,
22 cheerfulness, school pride, respect for the environment,
23 patience, creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty, and
24 perseverance. Each plan of instruction shall include the
25 Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

26 "(i) The State Board of Education shall adopt
27 necessary policies, procedures, rules, regulations, ~~and/or~~ or

1 standards to ensure quality vocational/technical education
2 programs.

3 "(j) Each local board of education shall certify on
4 an annual basis to the State Board of Education that the
5 applicable schools in the school district are meeting the
6 cursive writing requirements under subsection (f). The State
7 Board of Education may adopt rules to implement this
8 subsection."

9 Section 2. This act shall become effective
10 immediately following its passage and approval by the
11 Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.