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Governor Ivey Releases Statement on SB 94, the Bill that would Delay the Promotion Policy Component of the Alabama Literacy Act

May 27, 2021

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MONTGOMERY – Governor Kay Ivey on Thursday released the following statement regarding the delay of the promotion policy component of the Alabama Literacy Act in SB 94:

“As a former teacher and even more so as governor, I believe early literacy is the gateway to all learning. In the past several days, I have heard from Alabamians who support and from those who oppose the legislature’s approval of a two-year delay of the third-grade promotion policy included in the Alabama Literacy Act. Without the delay, the promotion policy is set to take effect at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, or one year from now.

“Everyone agrees that the past 15 months of the Covid-19 pandemic have been hard on all Alabamians, including school personnel, students and parents. However, to establish any delay at all in the Alabama Literacy Act prior to analyzing the 2020-2021 summative assessment data for reading would be hasty and premature. Therefore, I have notified the sponsors of the promotion policy delay that I have vetoed SB 94.

“Furthermore, as president of the Alabama State Board of Education, I am requesting that the state superintendent of education and his staff provide the board, and the public, a full and complete review of the Spring 2021 Assessment results in all subjects and grades, but in particular the data on reading in the early grades as soon as the data are available and have been analyzed. Once that is completed, I will ask the Alabama Committee on Grade Level Reading to review the relevant data and make recommendations regarding any necessary action. All the aforementioned work can take place this year, well ahead of any deadlines identified in the Alabama Literacy Act.

“As we address the impact of the pandemic on our students, we need the support and focus the Alabama Literacy Act provides: identifying and supporting struggling readers, teacher training and coaching, and clear communication with parents on where their children have needs and how those needs are being addressed. We must remain focused on ensuring that our students have the foundational reading skills they need to succeed.”

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