

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Education to which was referred Senate Bill No. 303
3 entitled “An act relating to supporting Vermont’s young readers” respectfully
4 reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the bill be
5 amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu
6 thereof the following:

7 * * * Literacy * * *

8 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

9 The General Assembly finds that:

10 (1) Literacy, particularly in early grades, is critical for success in future
11 education, work, and life.

12 (2) Roughly half of Vermont students are still at or below proficiency.

13 (3) Research in recent years is clear. We know how to teach reading in
14 a proven, evidence-based manner. Yet outdated practices linger in classrooms
15 and in educator preparation programs.

16 Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. § 1710 is added to read:

17 § 1710. MANDATORY COMPLETION OF LITERACY MODULES

18 (a) As used in this section, “professionally licensed” means a non
19 conditional, current license comparable to a level I or level II Vermont
20 educator license and does not include provisional, emergency, teaching intern,
21 or apprenticeship licenses or their equivalent in other states.

1 (b) On or before January 1, 2026, all professionally licensed Vermont
2 educators employed in a Vermont school shall complete a program of
3 professional learning on evidence-based literacy instruction developed and
4 offered or approved by the Vermont Agency of Education.

5 (c) After January 1, 2025, all newly licensed Vermont educators employed
6 in a Vermont school shall complete a program of professional learning on
7 evidenced-based literacy instruction developed and offered or approved by the
8 Agency before the end of the educator’s second year of teaching.

9 (d) Vermont public and approved independent schools that employ
10 professionally licensed Vermont educators shall collect and maintain on file a
11 record of completion of the literacy professional learning required under this
12 section. The Agency shall provide a format for recordkeeping, including use
13 of the State licensing system as appropriate.

14 (e) Educators shall provide evidence of completion of the literacy
15 professional learning required under this section upon the educator’s next
16 license renewal.

17 Sec. 3. LITERACY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING REQUIREMENTS;

18 AGENCY OF EDUCATION LIST

19 On or before September 1, 2024, the Agency of Education shall develop
20 and distribute a list of literacy professional learning requirements specific to
21 each licensing endorsement.

1 Sec. 4. RESULTS ORIENTED PROGRAM APPROVAL

2 (a) On or before July 1, 2025, the Agency of Education shall submit
3 recommendations to the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators
4 on how to strengthen educator preparation programs' teaching of evidence-
5 based literacy practices. The Agency shall also simultaneously communicate
6 its recommendations to Vermont's educator preparation programs and submit
7 its recommendations in writing to the Senate and House Committees on
8 Education.

9 (b) On or before July 1, 2026, the Vermont Standards Board for
10 Professional Educators shall consider the Agency's recommendations pursuant
11 to subsection (a) of this section and, as appropriate, update the educator
12 preparation requirements in Agency of Education, Licensing of Educators and
13 the Preparation of Educational Professionals (5000) (CVR 022-000-010).

14 (c) As part of its review under subsection (a) of this section, the Agency
15 shall make recommendations to the Vermont Standards Board for Professional
16 Educators regarding whether an additional mandatory examination is needed to
17 assess candidates for educator licensure skills in mathematics and English
18 language arts fundamentals, as well as candidates' understanding of the
19 importance of evidence-based approaches to literacy and numeracy, beyond
20 the requirements in Agency of Education, Licensing of Educators and the

1 Preparation of Educational Professionals (5000) (CVR 022-000-010) in effect
2 during the period of the Agency’s review.

3 Sec. 5. 16 V.S.A. § 2903a is amended to read:

4 § 2903a. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

5 (a) Creation. There is created the Advisory Council on Literacy. The
6 Council shall advise the Agency of Education, the State Board of Education,
7 and the General Assembly on how to improve proficiency outcomes in literacy
8 for students in prekindergarten through grade 12 and how to sustain those
9 outcomes.

10 (b) Membership. The Council shall be composed of the following ~~16~~ 18
11 members:

12 (1) eight members who shall serve as ex officio members:

13 (A) the Secretary of Education or designee;

14 (B) a member of the Standards Board for Professional Educators who
15 is knowledgeable in licensing requirements for teaching literacy, appointed by
16 the Standards Board;

17 (C) the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents
18 Association or designee;

19 (D) the Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards
20 Association or designee;

1 (E) the Executive Director of the Vermont Council of Special
2 Education Administrators or designee;

3 (F) the Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or
4 designee;

5 (G) the Executive Director of the Vermont Independent Schools
6 Association or designee; and

7 (H) the Executive Director of the Vermont-National Education
8 Association or designee; ~~and~~

9 (2) eight members who shall serve two-year terms:

10 (A) a representative, appointed by the Vermont Curriculum Leaders
11 Association;

12 (B) three teachers, appointed by the Vermont-National Education
13 Association who teach literacy, one of whom shall be a special education
14 literacy teacher and two of whom shall teach literacy to students in
15 prekindergarten through grade three;

16 (C) three community members who have struggled with literacy
17 proficiency or supported others who have struggled with literacy proficiency,
18 one of whom shall be a high school student, appointed by the Agency of
19 Education in consultation with the Vermont Family Network; and

20 (D) one member appointed by the Agency of Education who has
21 expertise in working with students with dyslexia; and

1 plan and on staffing levels and resources needed at the Agency to support the
2 statewide effort to improve literacy;

3 (3) develop a plan for collecting literacy-related data that informs:

4 (A) literacy instructional practices;

5 (B) teacher professional development in the field of literacy;

6 (C) what proficiencies and other skills should be measured through
7 literacy assessments and how those literacy assessments are incorporated into
8 local assessment plans; and

9 (D) how to identify school progress in achieving literacy outcomes,
10 including closing literacy gaps for students from historically underserved
11 populations;

12 (4) recommend best practices for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 literacy
13 instruction within the multitiered system of supports required under section
14 2902 of this title to best improve and sustain literacy proficiency; and

15 (5) review literacy assessments and outcomes and provide ongoing
16 advice as to how to continuously improve those outcomes and sustain that
17 improvement.

18 * * *

19 (f) Meetings.

20 (1) The Secretary of Education shall call the first meeting of the Council
21 to occur on or before August 1, 2021.

1 (2) The Council shall select a chair from among its members.

2 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

3 (4) The Council shall meet not more than ~~eight~~ four times per year.

4 (g) Assistance. The Council shall have the administrative, technical, and
5 legal assistance of the Agency of Education.

6 (h) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Council shall be
7 entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted
8 under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than ~~eight~~ four meetings of the Council
9 per year.

10 Sec. 6. 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 28, Sec. 7 is amended to read:

11 Sec. 7. REPEAL; ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

12 16 V.S.A. § 2903a (Advisory Council on Literacy) as added by this act is
13 repealed on June 30, ~~2024~~ 2027.

14 * * * Vermont Imagination Library * * *

15 Sec. 7. 16 V.S.A. chapter 135 is added to read:

16 CHAPTER 135. VERMONT IMAGINATION LIBRARY

17 § 4201. VERMONT IMAGINATION LIBRARY; PILOT; CREATION

18 (a) Duties of Agency. The Agency of Education shall:

19 (1) coordinate with Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) to ensure
20 statewide access to the Vermont Imagination Library program;

1 (2) manage the daily operations of the Vermont Imagination Library
2 program and provide oversight of the Imagination Library Special Fund,
3 including establishing library-based programs in each county, communicating
4 with and coordinating any volunteers at local and school libraries, and
5 advancing and strengthening the program to ensure enrollment growth;

6 (3) develop, promote, and coordinate a public awareness program
7 to make donors aware of the opportunity to donate to the Imagination
8 Library Special Fund; and

9 (4) develop, promote, and coordinate a public awareness program
10 to make the public aware of the opportunity to register children to receive age-
11 appropriate books on a monthly basis.

12 (b) Consultation with Librarian of Congress. The Secretary of Education
13 may consult with the Librarian of Congress concerning the establishment,
14 implementation, and funding of the Vermont Imagination Library.

15 (c) Eligibility. To receive books on a monthly basis, a child shall be under
16 five years of age and a resident of Vermont.

17 (d) Administrative costs. The Agency is authorized to retain up to five
18 percent of the funds appropriated to the Imagination Library Special Fund for
19 administrative and operating expenses related to implementation of the
20 Vermont Imagination Library program.

1 (e) Matching funds. The Vermont Imagination Library program shall be
2 funded by 50 percent private funds and 50 percent appropriated funds. The
3 Agency shall include in its annual budget request the estimated need to fund
4 the Vermont Imagination Library for the following fiscal year.

5 (f) Failure to appropriate funds. If the General Assembly does not
6 appropriate funds to the Imagination Library Special Fund, the Department of
7 Libraries shall cease to operate the Vermont Imagination Library and may
8 rescind any agreements associated with the operation or implementation of the
9 program.

10 (g) Reports.

11 (1) Annual report. Annually, the Agency shall report to the House and
12 Senate Committees on Education concerning the status of implementing the
13 Vermont Imagination Library. The annual report shall include data on the
14 number of children enrolled in the program, the growth of the program, and
15 any feedback received from parents and educators.

16 (2) Repeal of pilot. Every three years, the Agency shall include in its
17 annual report a recommendation on whether the Vermont Imagination Library
18 should continue to operate or be repealed.

19 § 4202. IMAGINATION LIBRARY SPECIAL FUND

20 (a) There is established the Imagination Library Special Fund, which shall
21 be managed in accordance with 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5. Private

1 funding for the Vermont Imagination Library shall be deposited and credited to
2 this Fund. This Fund shall be available to the Agency to administer the
3 Vermont Imagination Library pursuant to section 4201 of this chapter. Monies
4 in the Fund shall be used solely for purposes of the Fund and for necessary
5 costs incurred in administering the Fund.

6 (b) The Agency may accept gifts, donations, and grants from any source,
7 public or private, to be dedicated for deposit into the Fund.

8 Sec. 8. APPROPRIATION

9 The sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
10 Imagination Library Special Fund in fiscal year 2025 for the purpose of
11 establishing the Vermont Imagination Library.

12 Sec. 9. REPEAL

13 16 V.S.A. chapter 135 shall be repealed on July 1, 2027.

14 * * * Effective Date * * *

15 Sec. 10. EFFECTIVE DATE

16 This act shall take effect on passage.

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3 (Committee vote: _____)

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Senator _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE