

1 S.224

2 Introduced by Senators Ingram and Hooker

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Education; evidence-based structured literacy instruction;

6 kindergarten–grade 3; dyslexia

7 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require that  
8 kindergarten–grade 3 students and students with dyslexia in public schools  
9 receive evidence-based structured literacy instruction and that the Vermont  
10 Standards Board of Professional Educators evaluate teacher preparation  
11 programs to determine whether teachers are receiving appropriate training in  
12 literacy instruction.

13 An act relating to evidence-based structured literacy instruction for students  
14 in kindergarten–grade 3 and students with dyslexia and to teacher  
15 preparation programs

16 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

17 Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. chapter 1, subchapter 10 is added to read:

18 Subchapter 10. Evidence-Based Structured Literacy Instruction

19 § 141. EVIDENCE-BASED STRUCTURED LITERACY INSTRUCTION;

20 KINDERGARTEN–GRADE 3

21 (a) Definitions. As used in this section:

1           (1) “Dyslexia” means a specific learning disability that is neurological  
2           in origin, that is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word  
3           recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities, that typically results  
4           from a deficit in the phonological component of language, and that is often  
5           unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities. Secondary consequences  
6           may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading  
7           experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

8           (2) “Evidence-based structured literacy instruction” means evidence-  
9           based, specialized reading, writing, and spelling instruction that is  
10           multisensory in nature, equipping students to simultaneously use multiple  
11           senses, including vision, hearing, touch, and movement, to teach word  
12           identification and decoding strategies. Evidence-based methods of instruction  
13           employ direct instruction of systematic and cumulative objectives, with the  
14           sequence beginning with the student’s easiest and most basic elements and  
15           progressing methodically to more difficult material, as indicated by systematic  
16           progress monitoring. Each step is built on those steps previously learned.  
17           Components of evidence-based methods of instruction include instruction  
18           targeting phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllable  
19           structure, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

20           (b) Evidence-based structured literacy instruction. Evidence-based  
21           structured literacy instruction shall be used as the primary literacy instructional

1 method for public school students in kindergarten–grade 3 and for students  
2 with dyslexia.

3 (c) Early screening for dyslexia.

4 (1) Students enrolled in public schools in Vermont shall be screened for  
5 dyslexia:

6 (A) during the fall semester of kindergarten; and

7 (B) during the spring semester of kindergarten, first grade, and  
8 second grade if a student does not meet the expected literacy standards for  
9 those grades.

10 (2) In addition to these screening times, a student shall be screened for  
11 dyslexia upon the request of the student’s parent, guardian, teacher, counselor,  
12 or school psychologist to determine if the student qualifies for the school’s  
13 multi-tiered system of supports or response to intervention services.

14 (d) Students identified with dyslexia. If a student is identified as having  
15 dyslexia by the school, the school shall:

16 (1) notify the student’s parent or guardian;

17 (2) provide the student’s parent or guardian with information and  
18 resource material about dyslexia;

19 (3) provide the student with appropriate evidence-based structured  
20 literacy instruction; and

21 (4) monitor the student’s progress.

1 Sec. 2. EVALUATION OF TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS;

2 KINDERGARTEN–GRADE 3

3 The Vermont Standards Board of Professional Educators shall evaluate the  
4 syllabi and coursework of teacher preparation programs to determine the  
5 effectiveness of teacher training to provide reading instruction for all students,  
6 including the use of evidence-based structured literacy instruction for students  
7 in kindergarten–grade 3 and students with dyslexia. The evaluation shall  
8 include any recommendations for changes to teacher licensure requirements.

9 On or before December 1, 2020, the Vermont Standards Board of Professional  
10 Educators shall report its findings and recommendations to the House and  
11 Senate Committees on Education.

12 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATES

13 Sec. 2 and this section shall take effect on passage. Sec. 1 shall take effect  
14 on July 1, 2021.