

1        (e) Further support for supervisory unions and schools that are transitioning  
2        to the best practices recommended in the Report are necessary, particularly in  
3        the area of teaching literacy to students in prekindergarten through grade 3,  
4        given that proficiency in reading is an essential foundational skill for  
5        educational success.

6        (f) According to the 2019 assessment of reading proficiency by the  
7        National Assessment of Educational Progress, only 37 percent of Vermont  
8        students in fourth grade were proficient in reading, and that percentage has  
9        declined from 2002 (39 percent) and 2017 (43 percent).

10       (g) Ensuring that students in prekindergarten through grade 3 learn to read  
11       at a proficient level advances the best practices recommended in the Report, in  
12       particular ensuring core instruction meets most needs of most students and  
13       ensuring that students who struggle receive all instruction from highly skilled  
14       teachers.

15       Sec. 3. LITERACY GRANT PROGRAM

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

17       (1) “Eligible applicant” means three or more supervisory unions  
18       applying together for the same grant under this section.

19       (2) “Grant” means a grant provided under this section.

20       (3) “Participating supervisory unions” means the supervisory unions that  
21       are applying together as an eligible applicant.

First

Second

1           (4) “Program” means the Literacy Grant Program created by this  
2 section.

3           (5) “Regional leadership team” means the superintendent or designee of  
4 each participating supervisory union included in the grant application by the  
5 eligible applicant, and two representatives of schools within those participating  
6 supervisory unions appointed by the superintendent.

7           (b) Program creation and grant authorization.

8           (1) The Literacy Grant Program is created to enable supervisory unions  
9 to work together in a sustained and targeted manner to adopt best practices in  
10 teaching literacy instruction to students in prekindergarten through grade 3. In  
11 recognition that literacy proficiency is a foundational learning skill, this  
12 program is designed to assist supervisory unions implement 2018 Acts and  
13 Resolves No. 173 by providing students with the literacy skills necessary to  
14 ensure that core instruction meets most needs of most students and that  
15 students who struggle receive all instruction from highly skilled teachers.  
16 Subject to the terms of the program, grants shall be awarded to eligible  
17 applicants for two consecutive years.

18           (2) The Agency of Education shall inform supervisory unions of the  
19 availability of grants under this act and provide technical assistance to eligible  
20 applicants in applying for these funds. The Agency of Education shall also

1 advise supervisory unions of other sources of funding that may be available to  
2 advance the purpose of this act.

3 (c) Application for, and approval of, grant funding.

4 (1) On or before August 1, 2020, the Agency of Education shall develop  
5 the application for the grant program and post the application on the Agency's  
6 website.

7 (2) The application for the grant shall include:

8 (A) the members of the eligible applicant's regional leadership team  
9 and a description of its governance structure;

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10 (B) the person or persons who will disperse the grant funds among  
11 the participating supervisory unions, a description of the fiscal controls to  
12 ensure proper accounting of these funds, and the eligible applicant's program  
13 budget;

14 (C) the literacy indicators and outcomes the eligible applicant seeks  
15 to improve, which shall include each of phonemic awareness, phonics, reading  
16 fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, and any other areas of focus in  
17 teaching literacy;

18 (D) the priority problems of practice in teaching and improving  
19 literacy outcomes, including shared problems of practice across the  
20 participating supervisory unions;



1 action plan. If the amount appropriated for this purpose is insufficient to fully  
2 fund the grants under that section, then the grant amounts that are awarded  
3 shall be prorated.

4 (d) Use of grant funds.

5 (1) Grant funds shall be used to:

6 (A) establish the eligible applicant's regional leadership team and its  
7 governance structure;

8 (B) implement the eligible applicant's action plan to improve literacy  
9 teaching and outcomes under subdivision (c)(2)(F) of this section; and

10 (C) measure the literacy results and outcomes under subdivision  
11 (c)(2)(G) of this section.

12 (2) Grant funds may be used to:

13 (A) build literacy instructional leadership capacity to lead the  
14 improvement of the quality of literacy teaching and for the improvement of  
15 student learning;

16 (B) implement an instructional coaching model, as described in the  
17 guidelines for implementing effective coaching systems issued by the Agency  
18 of Education in March 2016 (Coaching Guidelines);

19 (C) implement a systems' coaching model, as described in the  
20 Coaching Guidelines;

Sixth