

1 S.114

2 Introduced by Committee on Education

3 Date: March 10, 2021

4 Subject: Education; literacy; teacher training

5 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to continue the  
6 ongoing work to improve literacy for all students in the State, while  
7 recognizing that achieving this goal will require a multiyear and  
8 multidimensional effort requiring continued focus by the General Assembly,  
9 the Administration, and school leaders.

10 An act relating to improving prekindergarten through grade 12 literacy  
11 within the State

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

13 ~~Sec. 1. FINDINGS~~

14 ~~(a) Addressing literacy outcomes is a key strategy for the successful~~  
15 ~~implementation of 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173. The following findings~~  
16 ~~from the report entitled “Expanding and Strengthening Best-Practice Supports~~  
17 ~~for Students who Struggle” issued by the District Management Group in~~  
18 ~~November 2017, which informed the development of Act 173, support the~~  
19 ~~urgency to improve Vermont’s literacy outcomes relative to special education~~  
20 ~~reform.~~

1 (1) “Investing in the effectiveness of core reading instruction is critical  
2 for students in general education and students with disabilities.”

3 (2) “Students with mild-to-moderate disabilities who struggle with  
4 reading may not be supported by teachers skilled in the teaching of reading.”

5 (3) “While some special education teachers across the supervisory  
6 unions had a strong background in the teaching of reading, others indicated  
7 that they did not have the training or background to be effective supporting  
8 students struggling in reading.”

9 (b) The data indicate Vermont needs to improve its literacy outcomes at the  
10 early grades:

11 (1) Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium results from 2016 to 2018  
12 indicate that only about 50 percent of students in grade 3 were proficient in  
13 English Language Arts in each of these years.

14 (2) From 2015 to 2019, Vermont’s average score in grade 4 reading on  
15 the National Assessment of Educational Progress dropped every year from a  
16 high of 230 to a low score of 222.

17 (c) The COVID-19 emergency has adversely affected student academic and  
18 developmental progress. Failure to address literacy outcomes now could  
19 significantly impact student development for many years to come, since  
20 literacy is foundational to the success of each student.

~~Sec. 2. PURPOSE~~

~~The purpose of this act is to continue the ongoing work to improve literacy for all students in the State, while recognizing that achieving this goal will require a multiyear and multidimensional effort requiring continued focus by the General Assembly, the Administration, and school leaders.~~

~~Sec. 3. LITERACY GRANT FUNDING; APPROPRIATION~~

~~The sum of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from [federal funds] for fiscal year 2022 to the Agency of Education. The Agency shall use this appropriation to provide grants to supervisory districts and supervisory unions, on behalf of their member school districts, to provide professional development for teachers in methods of teaching literacy. The Agency shall administer the grant program and determine which supervisory districts and supervisory unions are eligible and the amount to be granted to each applicant based on its assessment of the relative need for this funding, taking into account the following factors across applicants.~~

- ~~(1) literacy assessments of students;~~
- ~~(2) the number of literacy instructors per enrolled students;~~
- ~~(3) the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced priced meals;~~
- ~~(4) the percentage of students who are English language learners;~~
- ~~(5) discrepancies in outcome data on literacy for students from~~

~~historically underserved populations, including, to the extent that data is~~

1 ~~available in compliance with privacy laws, students who are Black,~~

2 Indigenous, and People of Color and students on individualized education  
3 programs; and

4 (6) the extent to which teacher professional development is integrated  
5 with a multitiered system of supports.

6 Sec. 4. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; STAFFING

7 The following position is created in the Agency of Education: one full-  
8 time, director level, classified position to serve as the Statewide Literacy  
9 Coordinator in the Office of the Secretary. The person hired as the Statewide  
10 Literacy Coordinator shall hold a masters' level degree, or have equivalent  
11 expertise based on work experience, in the field of evidenced-based literacy  
12 instruction. There is appropriated to the Agency of Education from the  
13 General Fund for fiscal year 2022 the amount of \$150,000.00 for salary,  
14 benefits, and operating expenses for this position.

15 ~~Sec. 5.3. 16 V.S.A. § 2903 is amended to read:~~

16 § 2903. PREVENTING EARLY SCHOOL FAILURE; ~~READING~~

17 LITERACY INSTRUCTION

18 (a) Statement of policy. ~~The ability to read~~ Literacy proficiency is critical  
19 to success in learning. Children who fail to read attain age-appropriate literacy  
20 proficiency by the end of the first grade will likely fall further behind in  
21 ~~school. The personal and economic costs of reading literacy proficiency~~

1 failure are enormous both while the student remains in school and long  
2 afterward. All students need to receive systematic reading literacy instruction  
3 in the early grades from a teacher who is skilled in teaching reading literacy  
4 through a variety of instructional strategies that take into account the different  
5 learning styles and language backgrounds of the students. Some students may  
6 require intensive supplemental instruction tailored to the unique difficulties  
7 encountered.

8 (b) Foundation for literacy. The State Board of Education, in collaboration  
9 with the Agency of Human Services, higher education, literacy organizations,  
10 and others, shall develop a plan for establishing a comprehensive system of  
11 services for early education in ~~the first three grades~~ prekindergarten through  
12 grade three to ensure that all students ~~learn to read~~ attain literacy proficiency  
13 by the end of the third grade. The plan shall be updated at least once every  
14 five years following its initial submission in 1998.

15 (c) Reading Literacy instruction. A public school that offers instruction in  
16 ~~grades one, two, or three~~ any of prekindergarten through grade three shall  
17 provide highly effective, ~~research-based reading~~ evidence-based literacy  
18 instruction to all students. In addition, a school shall provide:

19 (1) supplemental reading literacy instruction to any enrolled student in  
20 grade four whose reading literacy proficiency falls below third grade reading  
21 literacy expectations, as defined under subdivision 164(9) of this title,

1 ~~(2) supplemental reading literacy instruction to any enrolled student in~~  
2 grades 5-12 whose reading literacy proficiency creates a barrier to the  
3 student's success in school; and

4 (3) support and information to parents and legal guardians.

5 (d) Evidence-based literacy instruction. As used in this section, "evidence-  
6 based literacy instruction" means reading, writing, and spelling instruction that  
7 is supported by high-quality research that meets rigorous standards and is  
8 proven to translate effectively to classroom practices.

9 Sec. ~~6~~ 4. 16 V.S.A. § 2903a is added to read:

10 § 2903a. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

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

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

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

19 ~~(A) the Statewide Literacy Coordinator at the Agency of Education,~~

- 1 ~~(B) a member appointed of the Standards Board for Professional~~  
2 ~~Educators who is knowledgeable in licensing requirements for teaching~~  
3 ~~literacy, appointed by the Standards Board;~~  
4 ~~(C) the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents~~  
5 ~~Association or designee;~~  
6 ~~(D) the Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards~~  
7 ~~Association or designee;~~  
8 ~~(E) the Executive Director of the Vermont Council of Special~~  
9 ~~Education Administrators or designee;~~  
10 ~~(F) the Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or~~  
11 ~~designee;~~  
12 ~~(G) the Executive Director of the Vermont Independent Schools~~  
13 ~~Association or designee; and~~  
14 ~~(H) the Executive Director of the Vermont-National Education~~  
15 ~~Association or designee;~~  
16 ~~(2) 10 members who shall serve two-year terms:~~  
17 ~~(A) a representative appointed by the Vermont Curriculum Leaders~~  
18 ~~Association;~~  
19 ~~(B) four teachers appointed by the Vermont-National Education~~  
20 ~~Association who teach literacy, one of whom shall be a special education~~

1 ~~literacy teacher and at least two of whom shall teach literacy to students in~~  
2 ~~prekindergarten through grade three;~~

3 ~~(C) two family members, guardians, or education surrogates of~~  
4 ~~students who struggle or have struggled with literacy proficiency, appointed by~~  
5 ~~the Vermont Family Network;~~

6 ~~(D) two high school students or recent high school graduates who~~  
7 ~~struggle or have struggled with literacy proficiency, appointed by the Agency~~  
8 ~~of Education; and~~

9 ~~(E) one member appointed by the Vermont Legal Aid Disability Law~~  
10 ~~Project.~~

11 ~~(c) Members with two-year terms.~~

12 ~~(1) A member with a term limit shall serve a term of two years and until~~  
13 ~~a successor is appointed. A term shall begin on January 1 of the year of~~  
14 ~~appointment and run through December 31 of the last year of the term. Terms~~  
15 ~~of these members shall be staggered so that not all terms expire at the same~~  
16 ~~time.~~

17 ~~(2) A vacancy created before the expiration of a term shall be filled in~~  
18 ~~the same manner as the original appointment for the unexpired portion of the~~  
19 ~~term.~~

20 ~~(3) A member with a term limit shall not serve more than two~~  
21 ~~consecutive terms. A member appointed to fill a vacancy created before the~~

1 ~~expiration of a term shall not be deemed to have served a term for the purpose~~  
2 ~~of this subdivision.~~

3 (d) Powers and duties. The Council shall advise the Agency of Education,  
4 the State Board of Education, and the General Assembly on how to improve  
5 proficiency outcomes in literacy for students in prekindergarten through grade  
6 12 and how to sustain those outcomes and shall:

7 (1) advise the State Board of Education on how to update the statewide  
8 literacy plan required under section 2903 of this title and maintain that plan;

9 (2) advise the Agency of Education on what services the Agency should  
10 provide to school districts to support implementation of the plan and on  
11 staffing levels and resources needed at the Agency to support the Statewide  
12 Literacy Coordinator;

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

14 (A) literacy instructional practices;

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

16 (C) what proficiencies and other skills should be measured through  
17 literacy assessments and how those literacy assessments are incorporated into  
18 local assessment plans; and

19 (D) how to identify school progress in achieving literacy outcomes,  
20 including closing literacy gaps for students from historically underserved  
21 populations, and

1 ~~(4) review literacy assessments and outcomes and provide ongoing~~  
2 advice as to how to continuously improve those outcomes and sustain that  
3 improvement.

4 (e) Report. Notwithstanding 2 V.S.A. § 20(d), annually on or before  
5 December 15, the Council shall submit a written report to the House and  
6 Senate Committees on Education with its findings, any recommendations for  
7 legislative action, and progress toward outcomes identified in this section. The  
8 report shall contain an executive summary, which shall not exceed two pages.

9 (f) Meetings.

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

12 (2) The Statewide Literacy Coordinator, at the Agency of Education  
13 shall chair the Council, provided that until that position is filled, the Council  
14 shall select a chair from among its members.

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

16 (4) The Council shall meet not more than eight times per year.

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

19 (h) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Council shall be  
20 entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted

1 ~~under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than eight meetings of the Council per~~  
2 ~~year.~~

3 Sec. ~~7~~5. APPROPRIATION; ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

4 The sum of \$10,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund in fiscal year  
5 2022 to the Agency of Education for per diem and reimbursement of expenses  
6 for members of the Advisory Council on Literacy created under Sec. ~~6~~4 of  
7 this act.

8 ~~Sec. 8. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; ANNUAL BUDGET REQUEST~~

9 The Agency of Education shall, in its annual budget request to the General  
10 Assembly, include the amount of \$10,000.00 for per diem and reimbursement  
11 of expenses for members of the Advisory Council on Literacy created under  
12 Sec. 6 of this act.

13 ~~Sec. 9.6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON~~  
14 ~~LITERACY~~

15 (a) The Advisory Council on Literacy, created in Sec. ~~6~~4 of this act, is  
16 established on August 1, 2021.

17 (b) Members of the Council shall be appointed on or before August 1, 2021  
18 and, for members with a term limit, their service on the Council from the date  
19 of appointment through December 31, 2021 shall not be counted toward their  
20 term limit.

1 ~~(c)(1) In order to stagger the terms of the members of the Council, the~~  
2 initial terms of the following members shall be for one year:

3 (A) two of the teachers appointed by the Vermont-National Education  
4 Association;

5 (B) one of the family members, guardians, or education surrogates of  
6 students who struggle or have struggled with literacy proficiency appointed by  
7 the Vermont Family Network;

8 (C) one of the high school students or recent high school graduates  
9 who struggle or have struggled with literacy proficiency appointed by the  
10 Agency of Education; and

11 (D) the member appointed by the Vermont Legal Aid Disability Law  
12 Project.

13 (2) After the expiration of the initial term set forth in subdivision (1) of  
14 this subsection, Council member terms shall be as set forth in 16 V.S.A.  
15 § 2903a(c) in Sec. ~~6~~ 4 of this act.

16 Sec. ~~10~~ 7. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; LITERACY PLAN

17 On or before December 1, 2021, the State Board of Education shall, in  
18 collaboration with the Advisory Council on Literacy created by Sec. ~~6~~ 4 of this  
19 act, update the statewide literacy plan required under 16 V.S.A. § 2903.

~~Sec. 11 8. TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS, REVIEW~~

~~(a) On or before December 1, 2021, the Agency of Education in collaboration with the Standards Board for Professional Educators shall review:~~

~~(1) teacher preparation programs to assess to what extent these programs prepare teacher candidates to use “evidence-based literacy instruction”; and~~

~~(2) licensing and re-licensing criteria as it pertains to literacy instruction.~~

~~(b) “Evidence-based literacy instruction” means reading, writing, and spelling instruction that is supported by high-quality research that meets rigorous standards and is proven to translate effectively to classroom practices.~~

~~Sec. 12 9. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; REPORTS~~

~~(a) On or before December 15, 2021, the Agency of Education shall report its findings and recommendation under this act, and its progress in achieving the purpose of this act, to the General Assembly. The report shall contain an executive summary, which shall not exceed two pages.~~

~~(b) On or before each of December 15, 2022 and 2023, the Agency of Education shall report the statewide progress in achieving the purpose of this act to the General Assembly. Each report shall contain an executive summary, which shall not exceed two pages.~~

~~Sec. 13 10. EFFECTIVE DATE~~

1

~~This act shall take effect on passage.~~

*\* \* \* Purpose \* \* \**

*Sec. 1. PURPOSE*

*(a) The purpose of this act is to continue the ongoing work to improve literacy for all students in the State while recognizing that achieving this goal will require a multiyear and multidimensional effort requiring continued focus by the General Assembly, the Administration, and school leaders.*

*(b) The State has been awarded Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Section 2001(f) to carry out, directly or through grants or contracts, activities to address learning loss by supporting the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment programs, extended day programs, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs, and ensure that such interventions respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on at-risk student populations, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youths in foster care, including by providing additional support to local educational agencies to fully address such impacts.*

*(c) The purpose of the technical support for supervisory unions under Sec. 3 of this act and the contractor support for the Agency of Education under Sec. 4 of this act is to carry out activities to address learning loss and improve literacy outcomes.*

*\* \* \* Findings \* \* \**

*Sec. 2. FINDINGS*

*(a) Addressing literacy outcomes is a key strategy for the successful implementation of 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173. The following findings from the report entitled "Expanding and Strengthening Best-Practice Supports for Students who Struggle" issued by the District Management Group in November 2017, which informed the development of Act 173, support the urgency to improve Vermont's literacy outcomes relative to special education reform:*

*(1) "Investing in the effectiveness of core reading instruction is critical for students in general education and students with disabilities."*

*(2) "Students with mild-to-moderate disabilities who struggle with reading may not be supported by teachers skilled in the teaching of reading."*

(3) “While some special education teachers across the supervisory unions had a strong background in the teaching of reading, others indicated that they did not have the training or background to be effective supporting students struggling in reading.”

(b) The following data indicate Vermont needs to improve its literacy outcomes at the early grades:

(1) Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium results from 2016 to 2018 indicate that only about 50 percent of students in grade three were proficient in English Language Arts in each of these years.

(2) From 2015 to 2019, Vermont’s average scale in grade four reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress dropped every year from a high of 230 to a low score of 222.

(c) The COVID-19 emergency has adversely affected student academic and developmental progress. Failure to address literacy outcomes now could significantly impact student development for many years to come, since literacy is foundational to the success of each student.

(d) The General Assembly recognizes that improving literacy outcomes is a significant challenge for school systems and their constituencies, and that they will require time and assistance in making necessary changes.

*\* \* \* Assistance to Support Improved Literacy Outcomes \* \* \**

*Sec. 3. ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT IMPROVED LITERACY  
OUTCOMES*

(a) In recognition that literacy proficiency is a foundational learning skill, the technical support provided in this section is designed to assist supervisory unions improve literacy outcomes as part of their implementation of 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173.

(b)(1) The Agency of Education shall use the funding under Sec. 4(b) of this act to:

(A) provide professional development learning modules for teachers in methods of teaching literacy in the five key areas of literacy instruction as identified by the National Reading Panel, which are phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension; and

(B) assist supervisory unions in implementing evidence-based systems-wide literacy approaches that address learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

(2) The Agency of Education shall, in accordance with the assurances required to be given by the Secretary of Education to the U.S. Department of Education under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, direct this funding to:

(A) address learning loss through the implementation of evidence-based interventions that respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on student groups most impacted by the pandemic and for whom the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing inequities; and

(B) school districts that need additional support as evidenced by their needs assessment priorities in their COVID-19 recovery plans.

(c) The Agency of Education shall use the funding under Sec. 4(a) of this act to retain one or more contractors to provide the following technical assistance to supervisory unions:

(1) recommend how federal funds can be used to implement 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173 in the context of improving literacy outcomes;

(2) recommend evidence-based best practices in teaching literacy instruction to students in prekindergarten through grade 3;

(3) recommend how to provide professional development for teachers and school leaders in methods of teaching literacy; and

(4) recommend policies, procedures, and other methods to ensure that improvements in literacy outcomes are sustained.

*\* \* \* Agency of Education; Literacy Staffing; Appropriations \* \* \**

#### *Sec. 4. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; CONTRACTOR; APPROPRIATIONS*

(a) There is appropriated to the Agency of Education from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 pursuant to Section 2001(f)(4), Pub. L. No. 117-2 in fiscal year 2022 the amount of \$450,000.00 for the costs of the contractor or contractors under Sec. 3 of this act for fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024. The Agency may shift the use of this funding from the contractor or contractors to a limited service position that would expire at the end of fiscal year 2024 within the Agency focused on coordinating the Statewide literacy efforts.

(b) The sum of \$3,060,000.00 is appropriated from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 pursuant to Section 2001(f)(1), Pub. L. No. 117-2 to the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2022 for providing professional development learning modules for teachers in methods of teaching literacy and assisting supervisory unions in implementing evidence-based systems-wide literacy approaches that address learning loss for fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024. The Agency of Education may set aside not more than two percent of the

funds appropriated under this subsection to cover the costs of retaining and overseeing the work of the contractor.

*\* \* \* Advisory Council on Literacy \* \* \**

*Sec. 5. 16 V.S.A. § 2903a is added to read:*

§ 2903a. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

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

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

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

(A) the Secretary of Education or designee;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(D) one member appointed by the Agency of Education who has expertise in working with students with dyslexia.

(c) Members with two-year terms.

(1) A member with a term limit shall serve a term of two years and until a successor is appointed. A term shall begin on January 1 of the year of appointment and run through December 31 of the last year of the term. Terms of these members shall be staggered so that not all terms expire at the same time.

(2) A vacancy created before the expiration of a term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment for the unexpired portion of the term.

(3) A member with a term limit shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. A member appointed to fill a vacancy created before the expiration of a term shall not be deemed to have served a term for the purpose of this subdivision.

(d) Powers and duties. The Council shall advise the Agency of Education, the State Board of Education, and the General Assembly on how to improve proficiency outcomes in literacy for students in prekindergarten through grade 12 and how to sustain those outcomes and shall:

(1) advise the Agency of Education on how to:

(A) update section 2903 of this title;

(B) implement the statewide literacy plan required by section 2903 of this title and whether, based on its implementation, changes should be made to the plan; and

(C) maintain the statewide literacy plan;

(2) advise the Agency of Education on what services the Agency should provide to school districts to support implementation of the plan and on staffing levels and resources needed at the Agency to support the statewide effort to improve literacy;

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

(A) literacy instructional practices;

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

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

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

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

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

(e) Report. Notwithstanding 2 V.S.A. § 20(d), annually on or before December 15, the Council shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education with its findings, any recommendations for legislative action, and progress toward outcomes identified in this section. The report shall contain an executive summary, which shall not exceed two pages.

(f) Meetings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Sec. 6. APPROPRIATION; ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY*

The sum of \$24,000.00 is appropriated from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 pursuant to Section 2001(f)(4), Pub. L. No. 117-2 in fiscal year 2022 to the Agency of Education for per diem and reimbursement of expenses for members of the Advisory Council on Literacy created under Sec. 5 of this act for fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024.

*Sec. 7. REPEAL; ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY*

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

*Sec. 8. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY*

(a) The Advisory Council on Literacy, created in Sec. 5 of this act, is established on August 1, 2021.

(b) Members of the Council shall be appointed on or before August 1, 2021 and, for members with a term limit, their service on the Council from the date of appointment through December 31, 2021 shall not be counted toward their term limit.

(c)(1) In order to stagger the terms of the members of the Council, the initial terms of the following members shall be for one year:

(A) two of the teachers appointed under subdivision (b)(2)(B) of Sec. 5 of this act; and

(B) two of the community members appointed under subdivision (b)(2)(C) of Sec. 5 of this act.

(2) After the expiration of the initial term set forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection, Council member terms shall be as set forth in 16 V.S.A. § 2903a(c) in Sec. 5 of this act.

*\* \* \* Review of Teacher Preparation Programs \* \* \**

*Sec. 9. TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS; REVIEW*

(a) On or before October 1, 2022, the Agency of Education, in collaboration with the Standards Board for Professional Educators, shall review:

(1) teacher preparation programs to assess to what extent these programs prepare teacher candidates to use “evidence-based literacy instruction”; and

(2) licensing and re-licensing criteria as it pertains to literacy instruction.

(b) As used in this section, “evidence-based literacy instruction” means reading, writing, and spelling instruction that is supported by high-quality research that meets rigorous standards and is proven to translate effectively to classroom practices.

*\*\*\* Agency of Education Reports \*\*\**

*Sec. 10. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; REPORTS*

On or before December 15 of each of 2021, 2022, and 2023, the Agency of Education shall report to the General Assembly the statewide progress in achieving the purpose of this act, which is to improve literacy outcomes for all students in the State.

*\*\*\* Census-based Funding Advisory Group \*\*\**

*Sec. 11. 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173, Sec. 9 (Census-based Funding Advisory Group), as amended by 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 112, Sec. 4 is further amended to read:*

*Sec. 9. CENSUS-BASED FUNDING ADVISORY GROUP*

*\*\*\**

*(e) Meetings.*

*\*\*\**

*(4) The Advisory Group shall cease to exist on June 30, 2023.*

*(f) Reports. On or before January 15, 2019, the Advisory Group shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education and the State Board of Education with its findings and recommendations on the development of proposed rules to implement this act and any recommendations for legislation. On or before January 15 of 2020, 2021, ~~and 2022,~~ and 2023, the Advisory Group shall submit a supplemental written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education and the State Board of Education with a status of implementation under this act and any recommendations for legislation.*

*(g) Reimbursement. Members of the Advisory Group who are not employees of the State of Vermont and who are not otherwise compensated or reimbursed for their attendance shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than eight meetings per year in fiscal years 2019 and 2020 and not more than 12 meetings per year in each of fiscal years 2021, 2022, and 2023.*

*(h) Appropriation. The sum of \$5,376.00 is appropriated for fiscal year 2018 from the General Fund to the Agency of Education to provide funding for per diem compensation and reimbursement under subsection (g) of this section. The sum of \$9,018.00 is appropriated for fiscal year 2021 from the General Fund to the Agency of Education to provide funding for per diem compensation and reimbursement under subsection (g) of this section. ~~The Agency shall include in its budget request to the General Assembly for each of fiscal years 2022 and 2023 the amount of \$9,018.00 to provide funding for per diem compensation and reimbursement under subsection (g) of this section.~~*

*\* \* \* Effective Date \* \* \**

*Sec. 12. EFFECTIVE DATE*

*This act shall take effect on passage.*