

STATEMENT PROVIDED TO: House Education Committee
FROM: Meagan Roy, Ed.D. (Chair, Census-Based Funding Advisory Group)
TOPIC: Literacy Bill ([S.114](#))
DATE: April 13, 2021

The Census-Based Funding Advisory Group has had an opportunity to review the draft legislation in S.114 and offers the following comments for consideration.

Legislative Intent

The Advisory Group supports an overall instructional focus on improving literacy instruction and outcomes for Vermont students. We agree with the rationale outlined in the Purpose statement that improving literacy instruction "...will require a multiyear and multidimensional effort," and that comprehensive, long-term professional development is critical to improving district's ability to provide high quality literacy instruction for all students. The Advisory Group believes a focus on first instruction in early literacy is a critical component of implementing a high quality Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) as required in Act 173. As such, we believe a focus on literacy instruction can and should be incorporated into a district's overall 173 implementation plan. The Advisory Group strongly supports aligned professional development endeavors such as those described in S.114.

Role of the Census-Based Funding Advisory Group

The Advisory Group is concerned about language in the current bill that requires the Advisory Group to provide oversight to the Agency regarding dissemination of the Federal grants:

"The Agency of Education shall, in consultation with the Census-based Funding Advisory Group created under 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173 and the Advisory Council on Literacy created under Sec. 5 of this act, shall administer the Literacy Grant Program, determine which supervisory unions are eligible for the funding, determine required and permitted uses of the funding, and the amount to be granted to each supervisory union based on its 2 assessment of the relative need for this funding"

The Census-Based Funding Advisory Group is not the appropriate entity to advise the Agency on dissemination of funds on an ongoing basis. The Group statutorily ceases to exist in 2022, and the literacy grant would extend beyond that. The bill already creates an Advisory Group on Literacy, which is a more appropriate entity to advise the Agency on a more ongoing basis. The Census-Based Funding Group could certainly provide initial feedback to the Agency on overall criteria for dissemination of funds. Our group's recommendation would be to situate the advisory role for the literacy bill solely with the proposed Advisory Group on Literacy.