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H.823

Introduced by Representative Toof of St. Albans Town

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; literacy

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require licensed Vermont educators to complete a program of professional learning on evidence-based literacy instruction and the Agency of Education to conduct a review of educator preparation programs to strengthen educator preparation programs' teaching of evidence-based literacy practices. It also extends the existence of the Advisory Council on Literacy to 2027. This bill also proposes to require Vermont's public and private postsecondary educational institutions to work together with the Vermont Agencies of Education and of Commerce and Community Development and the Department of Labor to issue a report to the General Assembly on the post-graduation career and settlement behaviors of students attending Vermont colleges and universities.

An act relating to educator preparation and evidence-based literacy instruction

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

2 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

3 The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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 Yet outdated practices linger in classrooms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

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

11 § 1710. MANDATORY COMPLETION OF LITERACY MODULES

12 (a) On or before January 1, 2025, all currently licensed Vermont educators
13 employed in a Vermont school shall complete a program of professional
14 learning on evidence-based literacy instruction developed and offered by the
15 Vermont Agency of Education.

16 (b) After January 1, 2025, all new licensed Vermont educators employed in
17 a Vermont school shall complete a program of professional learning on
18 evidenced-based literacy instruction developed and offered by the Vermont
19 Agency of Education within the educator's second year of teaching.

20 (c) Vermont public and approved independent schools shall collect and
21 maintain on file a record of program completion.

1 (d) Educators shall provide evidence of program completion upon the
2 educator's next license renewal.

3 Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 1711 is added to read:

4 § 1711. RESULTS ORIENTED PROGRAM APPROVAL

5 (a) On or before January 1, 2025, the Agency of Education shall conduct a
6 review of the Results Oriented Program Approval (ROPA) program to
7 strengthen educator preparation programs' teaching of evidence-based literacy
8 practices.

9 (b) On or before January 1, 2025, Vermont educator preparation programs
10 shall certify that they comply with the updated requirements.

11 (c) The Agency may adopt rules on the ROPA pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter
12 25 as necessary to enforce this section.

13 (d) On or before January 1, 2025, the Agency shall develop and make
14 available a model examination for use by educator preparation programs to test
15 a candidate's skills in mathematics and English language arts fundamentals
16 and the candidate's understanding of the importance of evidence-based
17 approaches to literacy and numeracy.

18 (e) On or before January 1, 2025, educator preparation programs shall
19 incorporate the examination developed pursuant to subsection (d) of this
20 section into their program curriculum.

1 Sec. 4. TRANSFER OF RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; TRANSFER OF
2 RULES

3 (a) The statutory authority to adopt rules by the Standards Board for
4 Professional Educators pertaining to the licensing of educators and preparation
5 of educational professionals adopted under 16 V.S.A. § 1694 and 3 V.S.A.
6 chapter 25 is transferred from the Standards Board for Professional Educators
7 to the Agency of Education.

8 (b) All rules pertaining to the licensing of educators and preparation of
9 educational professionals adopted by the Standards Board for Professional
10 Educators under 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 prior to January 1, 2024 shall be deemed
11 the rules of the Agency of Education and remain in effect until amended or
12 repealed by the Agency pursuant to 3 V.S.A chapter 25.

13 (c) The Agency of Education shall provide notice of the transfer to the
14 Secretary of State and the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules in
15 accordance with 3 V.S.A. § 848(d)(2).

16 Sec. 5. COLLEGE RETENTION

17 (a) On or before July 1, 2025, the Agencies of Education and of Commerce
18 and Community Development and the Department of Labor, in consultation
19 with Vermont's public and private postsecondary education institutions, shall
20 issue a written report to the General Assembly on the postgraduation career

1 and settlement behaviors of students attending Vermont colleges and
2 universities. At a minimum, the report shall include:

3 (1) an analysis and discussion of why Vermont is dead last in the
4 country in percentage of college students who graduate from Vermont-based
5 higher education institutions and stay in Vermont; and

6 (2) a comprehensive plan to increase the percentage of Vermont
7 graduates who plan to live and work in Vermont for at least five years post
8 graduation, which shall include the following initiatives:

9 (A) better college-career pipelines between higher education
10 institutions and employers in Vermont;

11 (B) expanded career counseling and career development services on
12 campuses, focused on Vermont industries and companies;

13 (C) increased campus-community ties through service, cultural
14 exchanges, and other community initiatives; and

15 (D) incentives, including preferential or streamlined pathways to
16 licensure for graduating students.

17 (b) In preparing the report, the entities listed in subsection (a) of this
18 section shall have the administrative and technical support of the Agency of
19 Education.

1 Sec. 6. 16 V.S.A. § 2903a is amended to read:

2 § 2903a. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

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

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

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

11 (A) the Secretary of Education or designee;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 (3) two faculty members of approved educator preparation programs
21 located in Vermont, one of whom shall be employed by a private college or

1 university, appointed by the Agency of Education in consultation with the
2 Vermont Association of Independent Colleges and one of whom shall be
3 employed by a public college or university, appointed by the Agency of
4 Education in consultation with the University and the Vermont State Colleges
5 System.

6 * * *

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

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

12 (A) update section 2903 of this title;

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

16 (C) maintain the statewide literacy plan;

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

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

1 (A) literacy instructional practices;

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

3 (C) what proficiencies and other skills should be measured through

4 literacy assessments and how those literacy assessments are incorporated into

5 local assessment plans; and

6 (D) how to identify school progress in achieving literacy outcomes,

7 including closing literacy gaps for students from historically underserved

8 populations;

9 (4) recommend best practices for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 literacy

10 instruction within the multitiered system of supports required under

11 section 2902 of this title to best improve and sustain literacy proficiency; and

12 (5) review literacy assessments and outcomes and provide ongoing

13 advice as to how to continuously improve those outcomes and sustain that

14 improvement.

15 * * *

16 (f) Meetings.

17 (1) The Secretary of Education shall call the first meeting of the Council

18 to occur on or before August 1, 2021.

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 Sec. 7. REPEAL; ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

9 16 V.S.A. § 2903a (Advisory Council on Literacy) as added by this act is
10 repealed on ~~June 30, 2024~~ June 30, 2027.

11 Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

12 This act shall take effect on passage.