

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Education to which was referred Senate Bill No. 303
3 entitled “An act relating to supporting Vermont’s young readers” respectfully
4 reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the bill be
5 amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu
6 thereof the following:

7 * * * Literacy * * *

8 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

9 The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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 Yet outdated practices linger in classrooms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

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

17 § 1710. MANDATORY COMPLETION OF LITERACY MODULES

18 (a) As used in this section, “professionally licensed” means a
19 nonconditional, current license comparable to a level I or level II Vermont
20 educator license and does not include provisional, emergency, teaching intern,
21 or apprenticeship licenses or their equivalent in other states.

1 **(b)** On or before January 1, 2026, all professionally licensed Vermont
2 teachers employed in a Vermont public or approved independent school shall
3 complete a program of professional learning on evidence-based literacy
4 instruction developed and offered or approved by the Vermont Agency of
5 Education.

6 **(c)** After January 1, 2025, all newly professionally licensed Vermont
7 teachers employed in a Vermont public or approved independent school shall
8 complete a program of professional learning on evidenced-based literacy
9 instruction developed and offered or approved by the Agency before the end of
10 the teacher's second year of teaching.

11 **(d)** Professional learning programs approved by the Agency pursuant to
12 this section shall be substantially similar in content to professional learning
13 programs developed and offered by the Agency pursuant to this section.

14 **(e)** Vermont public and approved independent schools that employ
15 professionally licensed Vermont teachers shall collect and maintain on file a
16 record of completion of the literacy instruction professional learning required
17 under this section. The Agency shall provide a format for recordkeeping,
18 including use of the State licensing system as appropriate.

19 **(f)** Teachers shall provide evidence of completion of the literacy instruction
20 professional learning required under this section upon the teacher's next
21 license renewal.

1 Sec. 3. RESULTS ORIENTED PROGRAM APPROVAL

2 (a) On or before July 1, 2025, the Agency of Education shall submit
3 recommendations to the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators
4 on how to strengthen educator preparation programs' teaching of evidence-
5 based literacy practices. The Agency shall also simultaneously communicate
6 its recommendations to Vermont's educator preparation programs and submit
7 its recommendations in writing to the Senate and House Committees on
8 Education.

9 (b) On or before July 1, 2026, the Vermont Standards Board for
10 Professional Educators shall consider the Agency's recommendations pursuant
11 to subsection (a) of this section and, as appropriate, update the educator
12 preparation requirements in Agency of Education, Licensing of Educators and
13 the Preparation of Educational Professionals (5000) (CVR 022-000-010).

14 (c) As part of its review under subsection (a) of this section, the Agency
15 shall make recommendations to the Vermont Standards Board for Professional
16 Educators regarding whether an additional mandatory examination is needed to
17 assess candidates for educator licensure skills in mathematics and English
18 language arts fundamentals, as well as candidates' understanding of the
19 importance of evidence-based approaches to literacy and numeracy, beyond
20 the requirements in Agency of Education, Licensing of Educators and the

1 Preparation of Educational Professionals (5000) (CVR 022-000-010) in effect
2 during the period of the Agency’s review.

3 Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 2903a is amended to read:

4 § 2903a. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

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

10 (b) Membership. The Council shall be composed of the following ~~16~~ 19
11 members:

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

13 (A) the Secretary of Education or designee;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 (I) the State Librarian or designee;

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

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

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

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

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

3 (3) two faculty members of approved educator preparation programs
4 located in Vermont, one of whom shall be employed by a private college or
5 university, appointed by the Agency of Education in consultation with the
6 Association of Vermont Independent Colleges, and one of whom shall be
7 employed by a public college or university, appointed by the Agency of
8 Education in consultation with the University of Vermont and State
9 Agricultural College and the Vermont State Colleges Corporation.

10 * * *

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

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

16 (A) update section 2903 of this title;

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

20 (C) maintain the statewide literacy plan;

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

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

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

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

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

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

12 Sec. 5. 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 28, Sec. 7 is amended to read:

13 Sec. 7. REPEAL; ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

14 16 V.S.A. § 2903a (Advisory Council on Literacy) as added by this act is
15 repealed on June 30, ~~2024~~ 2027.

16 * * * Vermont Imagination Library * * *

17 Sec. 6. 16 V.S.A. chapter 135 is added to read:

18 CHAPTER 135. VERMONT IMAGINATION LIBRARY

19 § 4201. VERMONT IMAGINATION LIBRARY; PILOT; CREATION

20 (a) Duties of Agency. The Agency of Education shall:

1 (1) coordinate with Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) to ensure
2 statewide access to the Vermont Imagination Library program;

3 (2) manage the daily operations of the Vermont Imagination Library
4 program and provide oversight of the Imagination Library Special Fund,
5 including establishing library-based programs in each county, communicating
6 with and coordinating any volunteers at local and school libraries, and
7 advancing and strengthening the program to ensure enrollment growth;

8 (3) develop, promote, and coordinate a public awareness program
9 to make donors aware of the opportunity to donate to the Imagination
10 Library Special Fund; and

11 (4) develop, promote, and coordinate a public awareness program
12 to make the public aware of the opportunity to register children to receive age-
13 appropriate books on a monthly basis.

14 (b) Consultation with Librarian of Congress. The Secretary of Education
15 may consult with the Librarian of Congress concerning the establishment,
16 implementation, and funding of the Vermont Imagination Library.

17 (c) Eligibility. To receive books on a monthly basis, a child shall be under
18 five years of age and a resident of Vermont.

19 (d) Administrative costs. The Agency is authorized to retain up to five
20 percent of the funds appropriated to the Imagination Library Special Fund for

1 administrative and operating expenses related to implementation of the
2 Vermont Imagination Library program.

3 (e) Matching funds. The Vermont Imagination Library program shall be
4 funded by 50 percent private funds and 50 percent appropriated funds. The
5 Agency shall include in its annual budget request the estimated need to fund
6 the Vermont Imagination Library for the following fiscal year.

7 (f) Failure to appropriate funds. If the General Assembly does not
8 appropriate funds to the Imagination Library Special Fund, the Department of
9 Libraries shall cease to operate the Vermont Imagination Library and may
10 rescind any agreements associated with the operation or implementation of the
11 program.

12 (g) Reports.

13 (1) Annual report. Annually, the Agency shall report to the House and
14 Senate Committees on Education concerning the status of implementing the
15 Vermont Imagination Library. The annual report shall include data on the
16 number of children enrolled in the program, the growth of the program, and
17 any feedback received from parents and educators.

18 (2) Repeal of pilot. Every three years, the Agency shall include in its
19 annual report a recommendation on whether the Vermont Imagination Library
20 should continue to operate or be repealed.

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(Committee vote: _____)

Senator _____

FOR THE COMMITTEE