

1 S.303

2 Introduced by Committee on Education

3 Date:

4 Subject: Education; Agency of Education; literacy; Vermont Imagination

5 Library; libraries

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require  
7 licensed Vermont educators to complete a program of professional learning on  
8 evidence-based literacy instruction, require the Agency of Education to  
9 conduct a review of educator preparation programs to strengthen educator  
10 preparation programs' teaching of evidence-based literacy practices, and to  
11 extend the existence of the Advisory Council on Literacy to 2027. This bill  
12 also proposes to establish the Vermont Imagination Library for a three-year  
13 pilot period and to direct the Agency of Education to cooperate with the Dolly  
14 Parton Imagination Library to provide free books to Vermont children from  
15 birth to five years of age.

16 An act relating to supporting Vermont's young readers

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

18 \* \* \* Literacy \* \* \*

19 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

20 The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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 Yet outdated practices linger in classrooms  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

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

8           § 1710. MANDATORY COMPLETION OF LITERACY MODULES

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

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

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

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

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

2       § 1711. RESULTS ORIENTED PROGRAM APPROVAL

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

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

9           (c) The Agency may adopt rules on the ROPA pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter  
10       25 as necessary to enforce this section.

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

16          (e) On or before January 1, 2025, educator preparation programs shall  
17       incorporate the examination developed pursuant to subsection (d) of this  
18       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. 16 V.S.A. § 1694 is amended to read:

17       § 1694. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR  
18               PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS

19               In addition to any other powers and duties prescribed by law or incidental or  
20               necessary to the exercise of such lawful powers and duties, the Standards  
21               Board shall:

1           (1)(A) ~~Adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 with respect to the~~  
2           ~~licensing of teachers and administrators, and of speech language pathologists~~  
3           ~~and audiologists as provided in 26 V.S.A. chapter 87. [Repealed.]~~

4   \* \* \*

5           Sec. 6. 16 V.S.A. § 1694a is added to read:

6           § 1694a. RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

7           The Agency of Education shall adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25  
8           with respect to the licensing of teachers and administrators, and of speech-  
9           language pathologists and audiologists as provided in 26 V.S.A. chapter 87.

10          Sec. 7. REPEAL

11          16 V.S.A. § 1695 (review of licensing standards) is repealed.

12          Sec. 8. 16 V.S.A. § 2903a is amended to read:

13          § 2903a. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

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

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

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

1 (A) the Secretary of Education or designee;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 (B) three teachers, appointed by the Vermont-National Education  
21 Association who teach literacy, one of whom shall be a special education

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

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

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

9 (3) two faculty members of approved educator preparation programs  
10 located in Vermont, one of whom shall be employed by a private college or  
11 university, appointed by the Agency of Education in consultation with the  
12 Vermont Association of Independent Colleges, and one of whom shall be  
13 employed by a public college or university, appointed by the Agency of  
14 Education in consultation with the University and the Vermont State Colleges  
15 System.

16 \* \* \*

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

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

1 (A) update section 2903 of this title;

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

5 (C) maintain the statewide literacy plan;

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

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

11 (A) literacy instructional practices;

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

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

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

19 (4) recommend best practices for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 literacy  
20 instruction within the multitiered system of supports required under section  
21 2902 of this title to best improve and sustain literacy proficiency; and



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

4 \* \* \*

5 (f) Meetings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

17 Sec. 9. 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 28, Sec. 7 is amended to read:

18 Sec. 7. REPEAL; ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

19 16 V.S.A. § 2903a (Advisory Council on Literacy) as added by this act is  
20 repealed on ~~June 30, 2024~~ June 30, 2027.

1                                   \* \* \* Vermont Imagination Library \* \* \*

2           Sec. 10. 16 V.S.A. chapter 135 is added to read:

3                                   CHAPTER 135. VERMONT IMAGINATION LIBRARY

4                                   § 4201. VERMONT IMAGINATION LIBRARY; PILOT; CREATION

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

6                                   (1) coordinate with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL) to  
7                                   ensure statewide access to the Vermont Imagination Library program;

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

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

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

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

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

3       (d) Administrative costs. The Agency is authorized to retain up to five  
4       percent of the funds appropriated to the Imagination Library Special Fund for  
5       administrative and operating expenses related to implementation of the  
6       Vermont Imagination Library program.

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

11       (f) Failure to appropriate funds. If the General Assembly does not  
12       appropriate funds to the Imagination Library Special Fund, the Agency of  
13       Libraries shall cease to operate the Vermont Imagination Library and may  
14       rescind any agreements associated with the operation or implementation of the  
15       program.

16       (g) Reports.

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

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

4           § 4202. IMAGINATION LIBRARY SPECIAL FUND

5           (a) There is established the Imagination Library Special Fund, which shall  
6           be managed in accordance with 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5. Private  
7           funding for the Vermont Imagination Library shall be deposited and credited to  
8           this Fund. This Fund shall be available to the Agency to administer the  
9           Vermont Imagination Library pursuant to section 651 of this subchapter.  
10          Monies in the Fund shall be used solely for purposes of the Fund and for  
11          necessary costs incurred in administering the Fund.

12          (b) The Agency may accept gifts, donations, and grants from any source,  
13          public or private, to be dedicated for deposit into the Fund.

14          Sec. 11. APPROPRIATION

15          The sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
16          Imagination Library Special Fund in fiscal year 2025 for the purpose of  
17          establishing the Vermont Imagination Library.

18          Sec. 12. REPEAL

19          16 V.S.A. chapter 135 shall be repealed on July 1, 2027.

