

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 Yet outdated practices linger in classrooms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) On or before January 1, 2026, all professionally licensed Vermont
19 educators, as defined in subdivision 1691a(3) of this chapter, employed in a
20 Vermont school shall complete a program of professional learning on

1 evidence-based literacy instruction developed and offered or approved by the
2 Vermont Agency of Education.

3 (b) After January 1, 2025, all newly licensed Vermont educators employed
4 in a Vermont school shall complete a program of professional learning on
5 evidenced-based literacy instruction developed and offered or approved by the
6 Agency before the end of the educator’s second year of teaching.

7 (c) Vermont public and approved independent schools that employ
8 professionally licensed Vermont educators shall collect and maintain on file a
9 record of completion of the literacy professional learning required under this
10 section. The Agency shall provide a format for recordkeeping, including use
11 of the State licensing system as appropriate.

12 (d) Educators shall provide evidence of completion of the literacy
13 professional learning required under this section upon the educator’s next
14 license renewal.

15 **Sec. 3. LITERACY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING REQUIREMENTS;**

16 **AGENCY OF EDUCATION LIST**

17 On or before September 1, 2024, the Agency of Education shall develop
18 and distribute a list of literacy professional learning requirements specific to
19 each licensing endorsement.

1 Sec. 4. 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.

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

12 (c) As part of its review under subsection (a) of this section, the Agency
13 shall make recommendations to the Vermont Standards Board for Professional
14 Educators regarding whether an additional mandatory examination is needed to
15 assess candidates for educator licensure skills in mathematics and English
16 language arts fundamentals, as well as candidates' understanding of the
17 importance of evidence-based approaches to literacy and numeracy, beyond
18 the requirements in Agency of Education, Licensing of Educators and the
19 Preparation of Educational Professionals (5000) (CVR 022-000-010) in effect
20 during the period of the Agency's review.

1 Sec. 5. 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 Association of Vermont 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 section

11 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. 6. 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~~ 2027.

11 * * * Vermont Imagination Library * * *

12 Sec. 7. 16 V.S.A. chapter 135 is added to read:

13 CHAPTER 135. VERMONT IMAGINATION LIBRARY

14 § 4201. VERMONT IMAGINATION LIBRARY; PILOT; CREATION

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

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

18 (2) manage the daily operations of the Vermont Imagination Library
19 program and provide oversight of the Imagination Library Special Fund,

20 including establishing library-based programs in each county, communicating

1 with and coordinating any volunteers at local and school libraries, and
2 advancing and strengthening the program to ensure enrollment growth;

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 (f) Failure to appropriate funds. If the General Assembly does not
2 appropriate funds to the Imagination Library Special Fund, the Department of
3 Libraries shall cease to operate the Vermont Imagination Library and may
4 rescind any agreements associated with the operation or implementation of the
5 program.

6 (g) Reports.

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

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

15 § 4202. IMAGINATION LIBRARY SPECIAL FUND

16 (a) There is established the Imagination Library Special Fund, which shall
17 be managed in accordance with 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5. Private
18 funding for the Vermont Imagination Library shall be deposited and credited to
19 this Fund. This Fund shall be available to the Agency to administer the
20 Vermont Imagination Library pursuant to section 4201 of this chapter. Monies

1 in the Fund shall be used solely for purposes of the Fund and for necessary
2 costs incurred in administering the Fund.

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

5 Sec. 8. APPROPRIATION

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

9 Sec. 9. REPEAL

10 16 V.S.A. chapter 135 shall be repealed on July 1, 2027.

11 * * * Effective Date * * *

12 Sec. 10. EFFECTIVE DATE

13 This act shall take effect on passage.

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21 (Committee vote: _____)

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Senator _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE