

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 Yet outdated practices linger in classrooms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 (2) advise the ~~Agency of Education~~ Secretary on what services the
2 Agency should provide to school districts to support implementation of the
3 plan and on staffing levels and resources needed at the Agency to support the
4 statewide effort to improve literacy;

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

6 (A) literacy instructional practices;

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

8 (C) what proficiencies and other skills should be measured through
9 literacy assessments and how those literacy assessments are incorporated into
10 local assessment plans; and

11 (D) how to identify school progress in achieving literacy outcomes,
12 including closing literacy gaps for students from historically underserved
13 populations;

14 (4) recommend best practices for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 literacy
15 instruction within the multitiered system of supports required under section
16 2902 of this title to best improve and sustain literacy proficiency; and

17 (5) review literacy assessments and outcomes and provide ongoing
18 advice as to how to continuously improve those outcomes and sustain that
19 improvement.

20 * * *

21 (f) Meetings.

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 Sec. 6. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; POSITION; APPROPRIATION

17 (a) The establishment of one new permanent classified position is
18 authorized in the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2025 who shall provide
19 literacy support.

1 **(b) There is appropriated to the Agency of Education from the General**
2 **Fund in fiscal year 2025 the sum of \$100,000.00 for the literacy support**
3 **position established in subsection (a) of this section.**

4 * * * Vermont's Young Readers Grant Program * * *

5 Sec. 7. VERMONT'S YOUNG READERS GRANT PROGRAM;

6 APPROPRIATION

7 (a) There is established, from funds appropriated to the Agency for this
8 subsection, the Vermont's Young Readers Grant Program to provide grants to
9 school districts, supervisory unions, and public libraries for local costs
10 associated with book gifting programs. The Secretary of Education shall
11 administer the grant program, as follows:

12 (1) Eligible recipients shall be school districts, supervisory unions, and
13 public libraries that partner with book gifting programs for their local
14 communities.

15 (2) Grants shall be used for book gifting programs that provide books
16 free of charge to children from at least birth through age five, but require some
17 amount of local matching costs.

18 (3) Grants shall be used by eligible recipients to cover or supplement
19 local matching costs or fees associated with book gifting programs that meet
20 the requirements under subdivision (2) of this subsection.

