

1 Introduced by Committee on Education

2 Date:

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

4 Library; libraries

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

15 An act relating to supporting Vermont's young readers

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

17 * * * Literacy * * *

18 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

19 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 Yet outdated practices linger in classrooms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 (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 (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.

