

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 Yet outdated practices linger in classrooms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. **LITERACY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

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
2 prekindergarten through grade five Vermont teachers employed in a Vermont
3 public or approved independent school shall complete a program of
4 professional learning on evidence-based literacy instruction developed and
5 offered or approved by the Vermont Agency of Education.

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

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

15 Sec. 3. RESULTS ORIENTED PROGRAM APPROVAL

16 (a) On or before July 1, 2025, the Agency of Education shall submit
17 recommendations to the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators
18 on how to strengthen educator preparation programs’ teaching of evidence-
19 based literacy practices. The Agency shall also simultaneously communicate
20 its recommendations to Vermont’s educator preparation programs and submit

1 its recommendations in writing to the Senate and House Committees on
2 Education.

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

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

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

18 § 2903a. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

19 (a) Creation. There is created the Advisory Council on Literacy. The
20 Council shall advise the Agency of Education, the State Board of Education,
21 and the General Assembly on how to improve proficiency outcomes in literacy

1 for students in prekindergarten through grade 12 and how to sustain those
2 outcomes.

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

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

6 (A) the Secretary of Education or designee;

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

10 (C) the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents
11 Association or designee;

12 (D) the Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards
13 Association or designee;

14 (E) the Executive Director of the Vermont Council of Special
15 Education Administrators or designee;

16 (F) the Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or
17 designee;

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

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

1 (I) the State Librarian or designee;

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

3 (A) a representative, appointed by the Vermont Curriculum Leaders
4 Association;

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

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

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

15 (3) two faculty members of approved educator preparation programs
16 located in Vermont, one of whom shall be employed by a private college or
17 university, appointed by the Agency of Education in consultation with the
18 Association of Vermont Independent Colleges, and one of whom shall be
19 employed by a public college or university, appointed by the Agency of
20 Education in consultation with the University of Vermont and State
21 Agricultural College and the Vermont State Colleges Corporation.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

* * *

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

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

(A) update section 2903 of this title;

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

(C) maintain the statewide literacy plan;

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

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

(A) literacy instructional practices;

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

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

1 (D) how to identify school progress in achieving literacy outcomes,
2 including closing literacy gaps for students from historically underserved
3 populations;

4 (4) recommend best practices for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 literacy
5 instruction within the multitiered system of supports required under section
6 2902 of this title to best improve and sustain literacy proficiency; ~~and~~

7 (5) review literacy assessments and outcomes and provide ongoing
8 advice as to how to continuously improve those outcomes and sustain that
9 improvement; and

10 (6) advise the Agency and Department of Libraries on the need for the
11 development of book distribution programs for children ages birth through five
12 years of age that support early childhood literacy in high-need communities
13 and households and develop such programs as appropriate.

14 * * *

15 (f) Meetings.

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

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

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

20 (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. 5. 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 * * * Agency of Education Literacy Position * * *

12 Sec. 6. 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 28, Sec. 4(a) is amended to read:

13 (a) There is appropriated to the Agency of Education from the American
14 Rescue Plan Act of 2021 pursuant to Section 2001(f)(4), Pub. L. No. 117-2 in
15 fiscal year 2022 the amount of \$450,000.00 for the costs of the contractor or
16 contractors under Sec. 3 of this act for fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024. The
17 Agency may shift the use of this funding from the contractor or contractors to a
18 limited service position ~~that would expire at the end of fiscal year 2024~~ within
19 the Agency focused on coordinating the Statewide literacy efforts.

20 Sec. 7. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; LITERACY POSITION;

21 APPROPRIATION

1 (a) The conversion of the limited service position within the Agency of
2 Education authorized pursuant to 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 28, Sec. 4(a) to
3 a classified permanent status is authorized in fiscal year 2025.

4 (b) The sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
5 Agency of Education in fiscal year 2025 for personal services and operating
6 expenses for the position converted pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

7 * * * Expanding Early Childhood Literacy Resources * * *

8 Sec. 8. EXPANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY RESOURCES;
9 REPORT

10 On or before January 15, 2025, the Advisory Council on Literacy shall
11 submit a written report to the Senate and House Committees on Education with
12 recommendations for expanding access to early childhood literacy resources
13 with a focus on options that target low-income or underserved areas of the
14 State. Options considered by the Advisory Council shall include State or local
15 partnership with or financial support for book gifting programs, book
16 distribution programs, and any other compelling avenue for supporting early
17 childhood literacy in Vermont.

18 * * * Effective Date * * *

19 Sec. 9. EFFECTIVE DATE

20 This act shall take effect on passage.

21

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

(Committee vote: _____)

Senator _____

FOR THE COMMITTEE