

Vermont Principals' Association
Supporting Leaders & Learners

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Senate Committee on Education

Brief Comments on S. 15

For the record, Jay Nichols, Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association. I want to start by clearly stating that the VPA fully endorses the testimony provided by the Chair of the Advisory Council on Literacy. We have a member on that committee who served as Vice-Chair and is an outstanding principal and has received statewide accolades for the improved performance of her students at the elementary level and later as a high school principal. We are committed to high quality literacy instruction. The report has great recommendations that we believe the General Assembly should strongly consider. Additionally, this is our first year under Act 139, the new reading law. One of the biggest complaints consistently from the field is that legislation is passed and then modified, augmented, or jettisoned without giving it time to work. The people actually doing the work in the field, principals, teachers, and support staff become very frustrated with this dynamic. What we know about research about programs is that if you don't actually give them time to be implemented thoroughly and with a degree of fidelity you are not likely to see positive results over time. This is true with laws as well.

We strongly encourage you to make no changes impacting Act 139 during this biennium that would actually change the implementation of the law but rather lean into the recommendations to help the law be implemented in a manner that works for schools and thus ultimately for children. The most important thing the General Assembly can do is make sure that any change in funding for schools doesn't leave our neediest students with even less resources to help them improve reading achievement. It is important to recognize that there is a very strong correlation between student reading achievement and economic status. It is our job as a state, through our schools and other programming and by providing necessary resources, to try and mitigate this fact and to decrease the gap between students based on economic status. Many of the recommendations and information in the Advisory Council's report speak to these needs.

Some resources to dive into as you see fit on the reading correlation piece from our friends at Chat GPT:

Here are several reputable studies and resources that explore the relationship between student reading achievement and economic status:

- **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Data**
This resource provides detailed data on student reading performance in the United States, including breakdowns by socioeconomic indicators.
[NAEP Reading Results](#)
- **OECD's PISA Reports**
The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) offers international comparisons of reading literacy, with analyses that often include insights into how economic background affects student outcomes.
[OECD PISA](#)
- **Meta-Analytic Review by Sirin (2005)**
This study, titled "*Socioeconomic Status and Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analytic Review of Research*," reviews numerous studies and quantifies the relationship between socioeconomic status and academic achievement, including reading.
[Sirin \(2005\) via DOI](#)

Each of these sources provides valuable data and analyses on how economic factors correlate with reading achievement, and they can serve as a starting point for a deeper dive into the research on this topic.