

1 H.668

2 Introduced by Representative Cupoli of Rutland City

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Education; structured literacy instruction; kindergarten–grade 3;
6 dyslexia; teacher preparation programs

7 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require that
8 evidence-based structured literacy instruction be used as the primary literacy
9 instructional method for public school students in kindergarten–grade 3 and for
10 students with dyslexia, that students in public schools be screened for dyslexia,
11 and that teachers receive training concerning evidence-based structured
12 literacy instruction for students in kindergarten–grade 3 and students with
13 dyslexia.

14 An act relating to evidence-based structured literacy instruction for students
15 in kindergarten–grade 3 and students with dyslexia and to teacher
16 preparation programs

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

18 Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 261a is amended to read:

19 § 261a. DUTIES OF SUPERVISORY UNION BOARD

20 (a) Duties. The board of each supervisory union shall:

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(18) Adopt a policy to address literacy outcomes for all students including:

(A) the implementation of a benchmark literacy assessment for all students in prekindergarten–grade 3 with scores that can be reported in a format determined by the Secretary;

(B) a process for identifying struggling readers, particularly for those students with dyslexia, and a description of the intervention processes dedicated to addressing the needs of these students; and

(C) a requirement for the board to formally review and publish an annual monitoring report on student literacy outcomes.

(19) Establish an annual superintendent evaluation process that includes goals for improving student literacy outcomes.

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Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. chapter 1, subchapter 10 is added to read:

Subchapter 10. Dyslexia

§ 141. EVIDENCE-BASED STRUCTURED LITERACY INSTRUCTION;

KINDERGARTEN–GRADE 3

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) “Dyslexia” means a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin, that is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word

1 recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities, that typically results
2 from a deficit in the phonological component of language, and that is often
3 unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities. Secondary consequences
4 may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading
5 experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

6 (2) “Evidence-based structured literacy instruction” means evidence-
7 based, specialized reading, writing, and spelling instruction that is
8 multisensory in nature, equipping students to simultaneously use multiple
9 senses, including vision, hearing, touch, and movement, to teach word
10 identification and decoding strategies. Evidence-based methods of instruction
11 employ direct instruction of systematic and cumulative objectives, with the
12 sequence beginning with the student’s easiest and most basic elements and
13 progressing methodically to more difficult material, as indicated by systematic
14 progress monitoring. Each step is built on those steps previously learned.
15 Components of evidence-based methods of instruction include instruction
16 targeting phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllable
17 structure, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

18 (b) Evidence-based structured literacy instruction. Evidence-based
19 structured literacy instruction shall be used as the primary literacy instructional
20 method for public school students in kindergarten–grade 3 and for students
21 with dyslexia.

1 (c) Early screening for dyslexia.

2 (1) Students enrolled in public schools in Vermont shall be screened for
3 dyslexia:

4 (A) during the fall semester of kindergarten; and

5 (B) during the spring semester of kindergarten, first grade, and
6 second grade if a student does not meet the expected literacy standards for
7 those grades.

8 (2) In addition to these screening times, a student shall be screened for
9 dyslexia upon the request of the student's parent, guardian, teacher, counselor,
10 or school psychologist to determine if the student qualifies for the school's
11 multitiered system of supports or response to intervention services.

12 (d) Students identified with dyslexia. If a student is identified as having
13 dyslexia by the school, the school shall:

14 (1) notify the student's parent or guardian;

15 (2) provide the student's parent or guardian with information and
16 resource material about dyslexia;

17 (3) provide the student with appropriate evidence-based structured
18 literacy instruction; and

19 (4) monitor the student's progress.

1 Sec. 3. EVALUATION OF TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS;

2 KINDERGARTEN–GRADE 3

3 The Vermont Standards Board of Professional Educators shall evaluate the
4 syllabi and coursework of teacher preparation programs to determine the
5 effectiveness of teacher training in providing reading instruction for all
6 students, including the use of evidence-based structured literacy instruction for
7 students in kindergarten–grade 3 and students with dyslexia. The evaluation
8 shall include any recommendations for changes to teacher licensure
9 requirements. On or before December 1, 2020, the Vermont Standards Board
10 of Professional Educators shall report its findings and recommendations to the
11 House and Senate Committees on Education.

12 Sec. 4. MODEL LITERACY POLICY

13 On or before August 1, 2020, the Agency of Education, in consultation with
14 the Vermont School Boards Association, shall develop and publish on their
15 websites a model literacy policy.

16 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATES

17 Secs. 1, 3, and 4, and this section shall take effect on passage. Sec. 2 shall
18 take effect on July 1, 2021.