

1 S.281

2 Introduced by Senator Champion

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Education; literacy

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require
7 licensed Vermont educators to complete a program of professional learning on
8 evidence-based literacy instruction and the Agency of Education to conduct a
9 review of educator preparation programs to strengthen educator preparation
10 programs' teaching of evidence-based literacy practices. It also extends the
11 existence of the Advisory Council on Literacy to 2027.

12 An act relating to educator preparation and evidence-based literacy
13 instruction

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

15 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

16 The General Assembly finds that:

17 (1) Literacy, particularly in early grades, is critical for success in future
18 education, work, and life.

19 (2) Roughly half of Vermont students are still at or below proficiency.

1 (3) Research in recent years is clear. We know how to teach reading in
2 a proven, evidence-based manner. Yet outdated practices linger in classrooms
3 and in educator preparation programs.

4 Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. § 1710 is added to read:

5 § 1710. MANDATORY COMPLETION OF LITERACY MODULES

6 (a) On or before January 1, 2025, all currently licensed Vermont educators
7 employed in a Vermont school shall complete a program of professional
8 learning on evidence-based literacy instruction developed and offered by the
9 Vermont Agency of Education.

10 (b) After January 1, 2025, all new licensed Vermont educators employed in
11 a Vermont school shall complete a program of professional learning on
12 evidenced-based literacy instruction developed and offered by the Vermont
13 Agency of Education within the educator’s second year of teaching.

14 (c) Vermont public and approved independent schools shall collect and
15 maintain on file a record of program completion.

16 (d) Educators shall provide evidence of program completion upon the
17 educator’s next license renewal.

18 Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 1711 is added to read:

19 § 1711. RESULTS ORIENTED PROGRAM APPROVAL

20 (a) On or before January 1, 2025, the Agency of Education shall conduct a
21 review of the Results Oriented Program Approval (ROPA) program to

1 strengthen educator preparation programs' teaching of evidence-based literacy
2 practices.

3 (b) On or before January 1, 2025, Vermont educator preparation programs
4 shall certify that they comply with the updated requirements.

5 (c) The Agency may adopt rules on the ROPA pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter
6 25 as necessary to enforce this section.

7 (d) On or before January 1, 2025, the Agency shall develop and make
8 available a model examination for use by educator preparation programs to test
9 a candidate's skills in mathematics and English language arts fundamentals
10 and the candidate's understanding of the importance of evidence-based
11 approaches to literacy and numeracy.

12 (e) On or before January 1, 2025, educator preparation programs shall
13 incorporate the examination developed pursuant to subsection (d) of this
14 section into their program curriculum.

15 Sec. 4. TRANSFER OF RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; TRANSFER OF

16 RULES

17 (a) The statutory authority to adopt rules by the Standards Board for
18 Professional Educators pertaining to the licensing of educators and preparation
19 of educational professionals adopted under 16 V.S.A. § 1694 and 3 V.S.A.
20 chapter 25 is transferred from the Standards Board for Professional Educators
21 to the Agency of Education.

1 (b) All rules pertaining to the licensing of educators and preparation of
2 educational professionals adopted by the Standards Board for Professional
3 Educators under 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 prior to January 1, 2024 shall be deemed
4 the rules of the Agency of Education and remain in effect until amended or
5 repealed by the Agency pursuant to 3 V.S.A chapter 25.

6 (c) The Agency of Education shall provide notice of the transfer to the
7 Secretary of State and the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules in
8 accordance with 3 V.S.A. § 848(d)(2).

9 Sec. 5. 16 V.S.A. § 2903a is amended to read:

10 § 2903a. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

11 (a) Creation. There is created the Advisory Council on Literacy. The
12 Council shall advise the Agency of Education, the State Board of Education,
13 and the General Assembly on how to improve proficiency outcomes in literacy
14 for students in prekindergarten through grade 12 and how to sustain those
15 outcomes.

16 (b) Membership. The Council shall be composed of the following ~~16~~ 18
17 members:

18 (1) eight members who shall serve as ex officio members:

19 (A) the Secretary of Education or designee;

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

4 (C) the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents
5 Association or designee;

6 (D) the Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards
7 Association or designee;

8 (E) the Executive Director of the Vermont Council of Special
9 Education Administrators or designee;

10 (F) the Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or
11 designee;

12 (G) the Executive Director of the Vermont Independent Schools
13 Association or designee; and

14 (H) the Executive Director of the Vermont-National Education
15 Association or designee; ~~and~~

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

17 (A) a representative appointed by the Vermont Curriculum Leaders
18 Association;

19 (B) three teachers appointed by the Vermont-National Education
20 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 (5) review literacy assessments and outcomes and provide ongoing
2 advice as to how to continuously improve those outcomes and sustain that
3 improvement.

4 * * *

5 (f) Meetings.

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

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

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

10 (4) The Council shall meet not more than ~~eight~~ four times per year.

11 (g) Assistance. The Council shall have the administrative, technical, and
12 legal assistance of the Agency of Education.

13 (h) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Council shall be
14 entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted
15 under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than ~~eight~~ four meetings of the Council
16 per year.

17 Sec. 6. 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 28, Sec. 7 is amended to read:

18 Sec. 7. REPEAL; ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LITERACY

19 16 V.S.A. § 2903a (Advisory Council on Literacy) as added by this act is
20 repealed on ~~June 30, 2024~~ June 30, 2027.

1 Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

2 This act shall take effect on passage.