

**Act 139 Report to the Vermont Standards Board  
Advisory Council on Literacy Summary  
9 January 2025**

**The Advisory Council on Literacy submitted a report to the legislature on 15 December 2024.**

**Executive Summary**

Act 28 of 2021 (Act 28) established the Advisory Council on Literacy (Council) to advise the Agency of Education (AOE), the State Board of Education (SBE), and the General Assembly. The Council's role is to advise on how to improve proficiency outcomes in literacy for students in prekindergarten through grade 12, how to sustain those outcomes and provide advice on efforts to improve literacy achievement for all students.

The 2024 Council report outlines the efforts to enhance literacy achievement for Vermont students, focusing primarily on early grades (kindergarten through grade 3) as mandated by Acts 28 and Act 139 of 2024. The Council reviewed assessment results from the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program (VTCAP) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), identifying significant achievement gaps and the need for improved literacy outcomes. VTCAP results showed a 52% proficiency rate, with notable disparities among different student groups, while NAEP results indicated a decline in reading proficiency from 2019 to 2022.

The Council recommended robust data collection practices to inform instructional planning and professional development, despite concerns about the capacity for effective data collection due to limited resources. Future work will focus on adolescent literacy, acknowledging low achievement levels and the need for professional learning opportunities.

Act 139, signed in 2024, emphasizes evidence-based literacy instruction, requiring universal screening and interventions for students in early grades. The Council's recommendations align with this act, advocating for systematic, explicit instruction and multi-tiered support systems. The report concludes by highlighting the collaborative efforts of Vermont's educational community in improving literacy outcomes, while acknowledging ongoing challenges and celebrating recent achievements.

**Recommendations**

**Recommendations: Assessment Results**

- Maintain support for literacy improvement efforts
- Continue the Advisory Council on Literacy
- Provide funding for a literacy specialist position at the Agency of Education (1.0 FTE, permanent)
- Provide funding for resource development and professional learning opportunities

**Recommendations: Data Collection**

- Keep data collection at the supervisory union/school district level, the location most needed to provide instruction and intervention
- Collect broad data such as the percentage of achieving below grade level proficiency or name of screeners used to gather data

**Recommendations for Future Work:**

- Expand the focus of the Council's work to include adolescent literacy to strengthen literacy efforts and literacy achievement for students in grade 4 and beyond

Recommendations developed by the Council align with current state requirements Statute 2902 (16 V.S.A. § 2902), Statute 2903 (16 V.S.A. § 2903), Act 28, Act 173 & Vermont's Education Quality Standards (EQS), Act 139, and evidence-based practices in order to promote and sustain the improvement of literacy outcomes and close achievement gaps.

The Advisory Council on Literacy is deeply committed to increasing literacy outcomes for all students.

Respectfully submitted by Bill Clark, 9 January 2025