

# 2024 Legislative Summary

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State Board of Education, June 11, 2024 – Item G

# Agenda

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- **Session Themes**
- **Bills Passed**
  - Literacy
  - School Construction
- **Questions**



# Session Themes

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- Policy Initiatives:
  - Literacy
  - CTE
- Education Funding
- Education Vision



# Bills Passed

# Act 139 | Literacy

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Major Elements of the Act include:

1. Findings
2. Reading assessment and Intervention Kindergarten through grade-3
3. Literacy Professional Learning (focused on assessment and intervention)
4. Advisory Council on Literacy
5. Agency of Education Literacy Position
6. Expanding Early Childhood Literacy Resources (Department of Libraries)

# Findings

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- The Advisory Council on Literacy (created in Act 28 of 2021) found that:
  - explicit and systematic instruction on code-based and comprehension-based reading skills and needs-based support are the most effective literacy practices for the early grades.
  - A strong focus needed on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension for all students, and needs-based tiers and layers of support are critical for struggling learners.
- Reading instruction is interwoven into the principles of creating culturally responsive and inclusive environments for all students.

# Literacy Assessment & Intervention K-3

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- The AOE to issue guidance on universal screeners
- All public and approved independent school to screen kindergarten- grade three students annually. When students are below benchmarks schools:
  - develop actions in general education or supplementary evidence-based reading instruction
  - Inform parents or guardians within 30 days
- Evidence-based instructional practices, programs, or interventions shall be effective, explicit, systematic, and consistent with federal and state guidance
- SU/SD and independent schools report the % of students below proficiency annually to the AOE & the AOE issue annual statewide report on proficiency



# Literacy Professional Learning

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- Each SU/SD and independent school to provide and keep record of professional learning:
  - For all K– 3rd grade educators and administrators
  - Includes screening assessment, interpreting the results, instructional practices and family communications.
- Results-Orientated Program Approval (ROPA): AOE make recommendations to VT Standards Board for Professional Educators on how to strengthen educator preparation program’s teaching of evidence-based literacy practices.

# Advising, Staffing, & Early Childhood

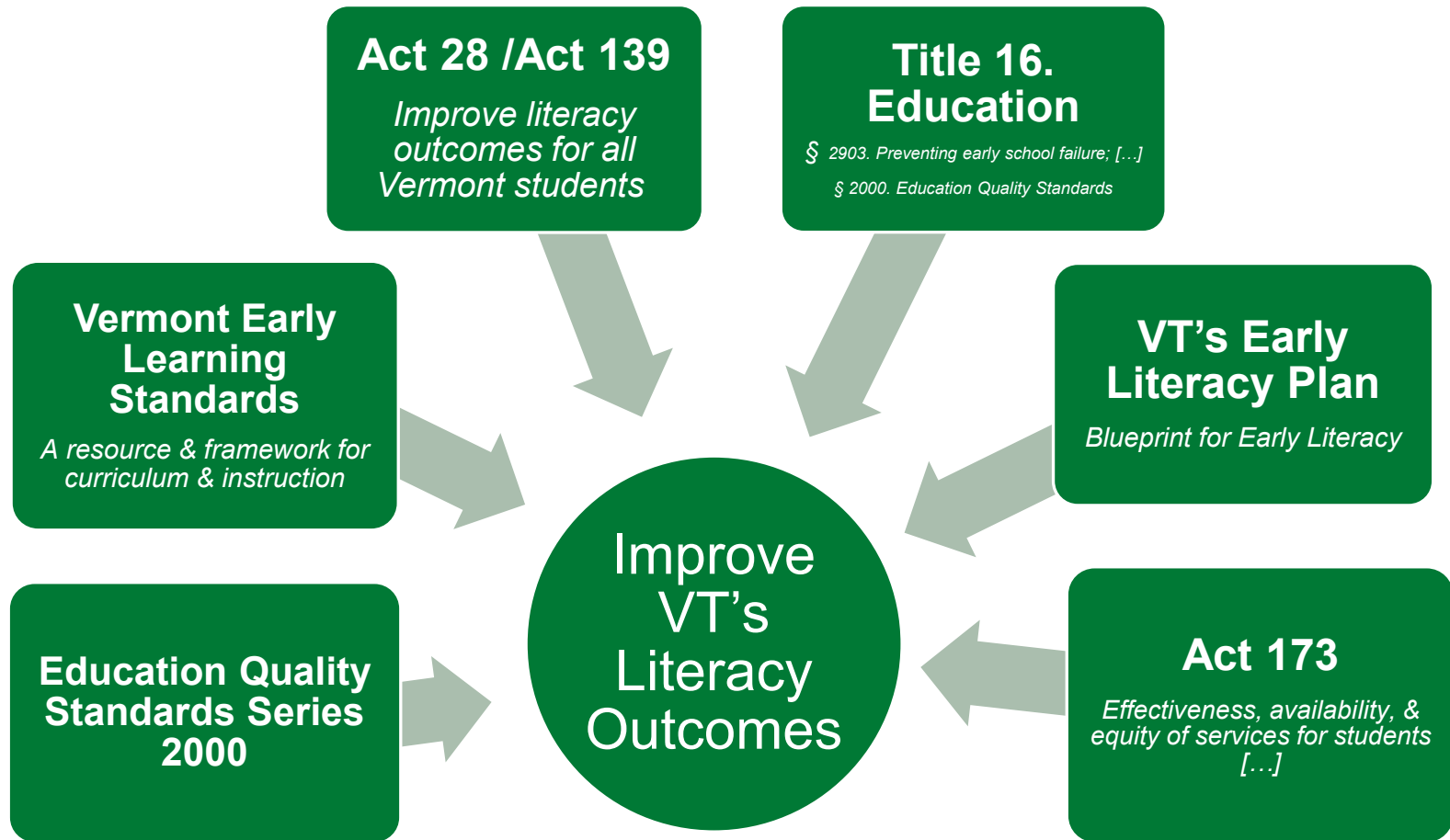
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- Advisory Council on Literacy to meet quarterly through June 2027
- Addition of one classified permanent status position within the AOE
- Department of Libraries to recommend opportunities for expanding access to early childhood literacy resources with a focus on low-income or underserved parts of the state

# Legislative Milestones

- July 1, 2024: Act 139 takes effect
- July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027: Advisory Council on Literacy meet quarterly
- Nov 1, 2024: AOE issue recommendations on parental or guardian notifications
- Jan 15, 2025: AOE issue report to Governor and Senate and House Committees on Education on status of improving literacy outcomes
- Jan 15, 2025: AOE issue report with a list of reviewed screening instruments
- Jan 1, 2025: approved independent schools receiving public tuition develop literacy plan
- July 1, 2025: AOE submit recommendations to VT Standards Board on strengthening educator prep programs
- July 1, 2026: VT Standards Board to consider AOE's recommendations and update educator preparation programs as appropriate

# Drivers to Improve Literacy Learning



# Act 149 | School Construction

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- Three major elements of the bill are to:
  1. Create a Master Facilities Grant Program
  2. Develop a list of prequalified architecture and engineering consultants specializing in K-12 design and construction
  3. Create a State Aid for School Construction Working Group

# Master Facilities Grant Program

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- Provides financial aid for Supervisory Unions and Career and Technical Education districts to engage with qualified A&E consultants to develop supervisory union level educational Facilities Master Plans
- Grants to be awarded based upon a prioritization formula that factors in both the applicant's poverty score and average Facilities Condition Index score
  - Consideration to award extra points for applicants applying with a regionalization focus that consist of more than one SU or CTE
- Award amounts will be commensurate with the gross square footage of the supervisory union

# Minimum Requirements for the Facilities Master Plan

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- Description of the educational mission, vision and goals of the SU/CTE
- Description of the current educational programs and services offered
- Performance of a space utilization assessment
- Identification of new program needs
- Development of enrollment projections
- Performance of a facilities assessment
- Information regarding the various design options explored to address the identified needs and gaps

# Prequalified Consultants

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- To remove the burden from Supervisory Unions of finding qualified A&E consultants experienced in Facilities Master planning , the AOE will work alongside the Department of Buildings & General Services in developing the prequalification criteria for such firms
- The Department of Buildings & General Services will maintain the list of prequalified consultants and this list will be made available to all Supervisory Unions and CTE's



# Working Group

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- The creation of a Working Group to study and design a plan for a statewide school construction program
- Comprised of
  - Three members of the House of Representatives
  - Three members of the Senate
  - The Secretary of Education, or designee

# Working Group Focus Areas

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- Governance Structure
- Prioritization criteria
- Eligibility Criteria
- State base share towards a construction project
- Incentives above base share
- Assurance and certification process
- Considerations around addressing environmental hazards and contaminants

# Other Working Group Considerations

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- Consideration for grandfathering projects started/finished prior to reinstatement of a school construction program
- Review of current statutes and SBE Rules that relate to construction and develop recommendations for amendments to align with the new program
- Align the proposed construction program with the fiscal modeling produced by the JFO
- Review and revise where warranted, the Vermont School Construction Planning Guide
- Consideration of other topics, factors or issues as is deemed relevant to school construction

# Implementation Timeline

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- The Working Group will convene on or before August 1, 2024
- The findings of the Working group will be submitted on or before December 15, 2024
- The Working Group will cease to exist on December 31, 2024



# Questions