

Vermont Reading Legislation, Structured Literacy, and Resources

Reading Legislation

Vermont Reading Legislation Act 139 (S.204) recognized the most effective literacy practices in the early grade are explicit and systematic instruction on code-based and comprehension-based reading skills and include need-based support.

The legislation aims to increase literacy achievement for all students, with a focus on early identification for students struggling with reading and student supports. It also includes strengthening educator preparation programs and ensures parents and guardians are informed of their child's literacy learning progress.

An amendment to the legislation clarifies that supplemental reading instruction is provided to any enrolled student whose reading proficiency falls significantly below standards for their age and grade level.

The VT Agency of Education website is a source of more information about how the legislation pertains to independent schools, as well as universal literacy screeners, supplemental reading instruction K-12 and parental notification.

The Vermont Family Network offers a recording of "[Unpacking Vermont's New Literacy Law, Act 139, to Teach All Students to Read](#)" workshop originally presented on 8/20/2024

Dyslexic Positive Libraries Initiative Disclaimer for Act 139

The Dyslexic Positive Libraries Initiative (DPLI) supports Vermont's Act 139 and its commitment to collecting, communicating student literacy data with families and implementing effective-based literacy instruction for all students.

While we recognize the importance of Act 139, DPLI affirms that there is no single correct pace for learning to read. Explicitly categorizing a child as a "below grade level" reader can easily harm a dyslexic child's "reader" identity and sense of self-worth. Every reading journey is unique, valid, and worthy of celebration.

It's also important to prioritize DEI and lived experience, and to ensure that legislation related to dyslexia and literacy involves the neurodiversity community.

The DPLI advocates for effective, neuroinclusive literacy practices. By connecting struggling readers with neurodiversity-valuing literacy specialists, and developing inclusive practices that support engagement and positively validate identity, we can foster treasured relationships with learners and their families that help dyslexic children grow into confident, lifelong readers

What is Structured Literacy Instruction?

Structured Literacy, as defined by [The Reading League](#), is a comprehensive approach to literacy instruction that emphasizes the structure of language, including phonology, sound-symbol associations, syllables, morphology, and syntax/semantics. It focuses on explicit, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic teaching of foundational reading skills, benefiting all learners, especially those with dyslexia.

Key Components of Structured Literacy:

- Phonology: Understanding the sound structure of spoken language, including phonemes, syllables, and phonological awareness.
- Sound-Symbol Associations: Learning the relationships between sounds and letters (phonics).
- Syllables: Understanding syllable structure and patterns in words.
- Morphology: Studying word parts (morphemes) and their meanings.
- Syntax: Understanding sentence structure and grammar.
- Semantics: Understanding word and sentence meaning (vocabulary).

Principles of Structured Literacy Instruction:

- Explicit: Directly teaching the skills and concepts needed for reading.
- Systematic: Presenting skills in a logical order, building upon previously learned concepts.
- Cumulative: Reviewing and reinforcing previously taught material as new concepts are introduced.
- Diagnostic: Assessing student progress and tailoring instruction to individual needs.
- Multisensory: Engaging learners through visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile senses.
- Diagnostic Teaching: Utilizing ongoing assessments (formal and informal) to inform instruction and meet individual student needs.

Benefits of Structured Literacy:

- Improved Decoding and Encoding: Students learn to break down words into sounds and letters (decode) and build words from sounds and letters (encode).
- Enhanced Fluency: With strong decoding skills, students can read more fluently.
- Increased Comprehension: Understanding the meaning of what is read.
- Support for Students with Dyslexia: Structured literacy is particularly helpful for students with dyslexia, who may struggle with the complexities of the English language.
- Overall Literacy Development: Structured literacy provides a strong foundation for all aspects of literacy, including reading, writing, and oral language.

Additional resources:

Wren, Sebastian. [10 Myths About Learning to Read](#). Reading Rockets.

Reading Science Academy. [Parent Introduction to the Science of Reading](#). YouTube.

University of Florida Literacy Institute UFLI. [Dyslexia & Developmental Language Disorder Hub](#).