

**State Board of Education
September 20, 2011
Item H**

Team: Integrated Support for Learning – Secondary & Adult Division

Discussion Topic: Key Strategic Plan Implementation Plan Actions

Alignment with Goals: Goals One, Three, Four and Five

Purpose of Discussion:

Update the Board and discussion about key secondary/post-secondary work in progress in relation to the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan. Specifically addressing pertinent secondary and adult learning initiatives underway as defined in Goal 1, Education Leadership; Goal III, Instructional Practices and Learning Environments; and Goal IV, PK-16 Partnerships.

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STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION – TARGETED UPDATE

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Goal One – Educational Leadership: All levels of Vermont’s public education system are guided by effective, transformative educational leaders.

Strategy Three – Model transformative and accountable leadership practices

Action Steps – 2, 4, 5 (pp. 6 & 7)

DOE uses Strategic Plan goals and strategies to create an implementation plan that frames priorities for policy development and staffing and service delivery including:

2. Redefining staffing priorities to support increased focus on:
 - a. Creating and attaining high expectations for every one of our learners, not just some
 - b. Purposeful engagement of key partners
 - c. Supporting innovation in education leadership
 - d. Improving communication, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination in all areas
5. Continuously updating the use of technology and data systems to create efficiencies and propel a-d above
6. Developing and retaining education leaders across the state who ensure implementation of practices that create the conditions to support equitable access to:
 - a. 21st century skill development connected to anticipated need in workforce preparation, college completion, and global participation as an independent adult
 - b. School community cultures, structures and instructional practices demonstrated to be successful in closing known achievement gaps related to poverty, disabilities, and gender while adequately challenging all learners to pursue learning to their highest potential
 - c. Responsible use of research, evidence based practice and technology in applying innovative practices to compel ambitious learning outcomes

Potential Targets:

- 1) Repurpose work and improve effectiveness without requiring additional staffing at the DOE
- 2) Improved relations with partners and educators in the field including improved understanding of DOE role
- 3) Continuously improving learner outcomes
- 4) Continuously improving educator effectiveness
- 5) Creating the conditions to support continued innovation and sustain efforts that are effective in achieving desired outcomes

Goal Three – Instructional Practices and Environments: Learning environments and instructional practices support multiple ways of learning, yield deep understanding and application of essential knowledge and skills, and ensure the success of every student.

Strategy Six - Work with schools and partners to implement individualized learning approaches, personalized learning goals, plans and assessments that provide a contextualized learning experience for each learner.

Action Steps – 1 – 11 (pp. 17&18)

- 1) Using existing bodies of work such as the Common Core College and Career Readiness standards, Career and Technical Education standards, Vermont’s Framework, Accu-placer Test requirements, Partnership for 21st

Century Skills framework, and Business and Workforce expectations, redefine Vermont graduation requirements and related learning expectations.

- a) Incorporate currently defined New England Secondary School Consortium policy priorities:
 - i) Providing competency based graduation expectations
 - ii) Providing equitable access for all students to reach those expectations through multiple pathways
 - iii) Ensure state and local accountability for implementation of revised expectations PK-16 and providing supports for school boards and educators to implement including revision of teaching structures, student advancement and grading practices,
- 2) Identify the full range of Expectations for Vermont Students to be career and college ready
- 3) Revise/Redevelop Vermont’s Framework to communicate those expectations
- 4) Define additional competency standards specific to a student’s individual path, i.e. construction technology; engineering; music performance
- 5) Define additional content knowledge and pedagogical skills for effective instructional practice specific to individualization (e.g. using technology for distance learning, adaptive testing, partnering with community to support independent study and service learning)
 - a) Incorporate in revised educator standards for preparation, licensure, professional learning, induction, mentoring and evaluation
- 6) Incorporate these skills and standards in work defined in goals 1, 2 and 3 above
- 7) Collect and disseminate effective models for individualized learning approaches, personalized learning goals, plans and assessments that provide a contextualized learning experience for each learner
- 8) Expand on the ILC system described above to include resources for learning and sharing best practice on individualized learning approaches
- 9) Work with key stakeholders to develop guidance on the critical elements of an effective model and frame considerations such as special education requirements, that must be addressed
- 10) Identify regulatory, statutory and contractual barriers if any, to fully implementing this strategy and work with stakeholders to resolve as necessary
- 11) Showcase programs/schools that exemplify this work

Potential Targets:

- 1) Increased levels of student engagement
- 2) Increased preparation for college and careers

Goal Four – PK-16 Partnerships: PK-16 education partnerships facilitate improved student success, by strengthening kindergarten readiness, increasing student engagement and relevance in K-12 education, and improving postsecondary aspiration, continuation and completion rates for all learners.

Strategy One - Participate in the formation and development of the PK-16 Partnership.

Action Steps – 1-5, (p. 19)

- 1) Identify DOE personnel on a PK-16 continuum of support and technical assistance
- 2) Align year one goals and strategies of the PK-16 council with VT DOE Implementation Steps
- 3) Engage VT DOE staff and the public education system in pursuing Council strategies
- 4) Integrate Council goals and strategies as appropriate into the Departments plan for school transformation
- 5) Identify resources to support the Council’s mission

Potential Targets:

- 1) Increased coordination and communication across the state education system
- 2) Consistency of goals and efforts across the PK-16 continuum

Strategy Four - Collaborate with higher education and appropriate partners to improve college and career readiness through such programs as dual enrollment, technical training, early college enrollment for high school credit, virtual learning, and Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) opportunities, and multiple pathways to graduation.

Action Steps – 1-3 (pp. 21&22)

- 1) Identify existing models and support further development of innovative, research-based models of flexible instructional elements and pathways in schools. These models will reflect the following design elements:
 - a) Address high-need, at-risk students, traditionally underrepresented among college-going populations
 - b) Focus on comprehensive, school and district wide improvement or targeted student interventions
 - c) Set high expectations for student performance
 - d) Establish strong relationships among students with staff to strengthen student engagement within the school environment
 - e) Emphasize development of critical thinking skills tied to challenging applications and real world project based learning
 - f) Create a college-going culture beginning at early grade levels
 - g) Establish partnerships between school districts and institutions of higher education to foster curricular alignment and encourage seamless transitions to college
 - h) Encourage acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college. (e.g. CCV's Introduction to College Studies)
 - i) Encourage attainment of college credit prior to HS completion
 - j) Support the use of competency based learning
 - k) Provide student support mechanisms, such as counseling, accelerated instruction, and tutoring for students to succeed in an environment of high expectations
 - l) Incorporate currently defined New England Secondary School Consortium policy priorities:
 - i) Providing competency based graduation expectations
 - ii) Providing equitable access for all students to reach those expectations through multiple pathways
 - iii) Ensure state and local accountability for implementation of revised expectations K-12 and providing supports for school boards and educators to implement including revision of teaching structures, student advancement and grading practices
- 2) Identify primary College and Career Readiness standards and assessment methodologies to measure attainment of these standards
- 3) Convene stakeholder group to identify VT Skills necessary for success in the 21st century and ensure they are reflected in revised SQS

Potential Targets:

- 1) Implementation of successful evidence based elements of innovative and flexible pathways
- 2) Statewide system to support above
- 3) Equitable access for educators and learners in using STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics integration) models
- 4) Equitable access to dual enrollment and resulting credit benefits
- 5) Viable transcript models to reflect flexible pathway learning and competency based graduation attainment

- 6) Strengthened career guidance and college planning systems in schools – increasing participation in low engagement populations
- 7) Equitable access for educators to related professional learning opportunities through strengthened statewide system of support including a comprehensive network of ESA’s

Goal Five – Policy and Governance: State and local policy and governance facilitate attainment of the educational practices and student outcomes articulated in the Vision statement. *Strategy Five – Engage with local, state, and national partners to advocate for the Vermont Education Transformation agenda.*

Act 44 (highlights)

Tom Alderman, Assistant Director, Integrated Support for Learning, Secondary and Adult Division

The phrase “Flexible Pathways to Graduation” appears in session law (Act 44 of 2009), but not in statute. It is recommended that the phrase be codified in statute as the title of a section designed to describe and fund a variety of innovative practices and programs leading to secondary graduation through non-traditional, flexible pathways. The practices and programs described would be those operated or contracted for by high schools and meeting quality standards developed by the Department of Education. High schools would be required to encourage and enable students to pursue such pathways in compliance with the expectations of Act 44.

In this scenario, the existing High School Completion Program (16V.S.A. § 1049a) would revert to its pre-Act 44 version in which it serves only unenrolled students. It is this portion of the existing program which would be implemented by the adult education system. The model, as applied to enrolled students, would become the responsibility of the high schools. Other innovative pathway elements that might be described under such statute would include work-based learning (e.g. “Linking Learning to Life”), virtual learning (e.g. “Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative”), early college opportunities (e.g. dual enrollment), and technical training (e.g. CTE).

It will also be important to define flexible pathways as distinct from the concept of multiple pathways. As the phrase is often used, multiple pathways are offered as a finite menu of programmatic offerings, one of which may be chosen by a student. Flexible pathways are limited in number only by the number of students pursuing them. That is, we should not define pathways in advance of development. Rather, we should continually develop elements that are determined to be of sufficient quality to be used within an approved pathway. Therefore, it will be essential that statute regarding “Flexible Pathways to Graduation” encourage the exploration and use of innovative practices. The goal of this legislation should be institutionalization of the most promising innovations.