

Adult Education and Literacy Policy Manual

**Vermont's Adult Education and Literacy System
Fiscal Year 2020**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Vermont's adult education and literacy system (VAEL) is composed of the direct service providers holding grants for the purpose of delivering services to adult learners statewide, and is regulated by the Vermont Agency of Education's AEL team. Currently, the service providers are Central Vermont Adult Basic Education (CVABE), Northeast Kingdom Learning Services (NEKLS), The Tutorial Center (TTC) and Vermont Adult Learning (VAL). These organizations, through a competitive process, have been given the responsibility to design and implement a statewide system for the provision of adult education and literacy services. The following vision and mission statements are intended to inform all aspects of the VAEL system's operations.

The Vermont Adult Education and Literacy Vision

VAEL will provide to Vermont the highest quality of adult education and literacy services. It will provide a comprehensive set of services in a consistent manner throughout the State in order to meet the educational needs of Vermont's adult learners in an equitable manner. It will be accountable for successful learner outcomes as measured in relation to the Equipped For the Future (EFF) Standards and College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education, which define the core knowledge and skills adults need to effectively carry out their roles as workers, family members and community members. The VAEL system will also align its efforts to the collective vision of Vermont's Unified State Plan. It will develop services and programs for this purpose and be an efficient and accountable steward of available resources.

The Vermont Adult Education and Literacy Mission

It is the mission of VAEL to meet the educational needs of Vermont's adult learners through supported goal-setting and successful literacy skill acquisition, English language acquisition, high school completion, transition to post-secondary education and training, and transition to employment. Adult learners in Vermont are defined as persons 16 years of age or older who are lacking essential skills and/or a credential equivalent to high school completion. It is the mission of VAEL to meet the commitment made by the State of Vermont to those adults seeking the knowledge, skills and credentials necessary for success as workers, family members and community members in today's world. It is the mission of VAEL to encourage and facilitate learner persistence, defined as a continuous learning process that lasts until an adult learner meets his or her educational goals. It is the mission of VAEL to encourage learners to engage in a lifetime of inquiry and learning.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) created a new vision for how the United States prepares an educated and skilled workforce that expands opportunity for workers and employers.

The State of Vermont has developed a [Unified State Plan](#) to meet the requirements of WIOA, Public Law No. 113–128. The Plan includes the four core WIOA programs:

- Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs under Title I
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Program under Title II
- Wagner-Peyser Act Program under Title III
- Vocational Rehabilitation Program under Title IV

Under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II Section 202 and Section 243) the fourfold purpose of federally-funded AEL programs is to assist:

- adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
- adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that
 - are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children; and
 - lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family;
- adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
- immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in
 - improving their:
 - reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English and mathematics skills; and
 - acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

To read more about WIOA’s Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (including the final rules/regulations), visit the [U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education](#).

Per WIOA, Section 203(3), The Eligible Agency is the sole agency in the State responsible for administering and supervising policy for adult education and literacy activities in the State, consistent with the law of the State. The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) is the Eligible Agency in Vermont under Title II of WIOA.

A Statement of Common Practice

In order to fulfill the vision and carry out the mission of VAEL, certain common practice will become the norm throughout the system that is VAEL. This common practice has been identified, through research and field experience, as having efficacy in relation to the vision and mission. This statement of common practice will be regularly reviewed and revised as dictated by emerging research and experience. In order to “provide a comprehensive set of services in a consistent manner throughout the State” the current statement of common practice will inform operational decisions until revised.

In order to encourage and facilitate learner persistence and therefore success:

- intake and orientation will help students understand the available programs, set realistic expectations, build a working relationship with program staff, and establish learning goals;
- initial assessment will provide students and teachers with information on student learning needs, be integrated with instruction, and form the foundation for measuring progress;
- each learner will have an education plan (also known as a personal learning plan) that reflects his or her learning needs and personal learning goals;
- programs and instructors will measure and recognize student achievement;
- staff, instruction, and support services will be sufficient to support effective learning, using evidence-based approaches to the essential components of reading such as Orton-Gillingham, or Wilson; and learning needs screening capacity such as the Learning Needs Screening Tool by Dr. Nancie Payne;
- learning opportunities and curricula will be aligned with *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education*.
- technology will be integrated into service delivery to extend and enrich learning opportunities;
- a variety of instructional modes will be available to learners; and
- learner accommodations will be available when appropriate to facilitate learning and to make materials and instruction accessible to all learners.

II. SERVICES

The VAEL system provides the comprehensive services necessary for learners to accomplish their goals and VAEL to accomplish its mission. To meet its mission, VAEL full-service centers are strategically located statewide, and each center will provide the following range of services:

A. Outreach, intake, and advising

The VAEL system will actively search out and enroll identified target populations.

Per WIOA, Section 203(4), “eligible individual” means, a person who:

- has attained 16 years of age;
- is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and
 - is basic skills deficient;

- does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
- is an English language learner.

The AOE does not require social security numbers or proof of citizenship to access AEL services. However, the purposes of WIOA and AEL are to serve those who meet the “eligible individual” definition in order to provide access to secondary school completion, basic skills instruction for those who need it, and transition services to postsecondary and employment as part of the workforce development system.

Notes on eligibility:

- Grantees will not deny services to eligible students without reasonable cause and prior consultation with the Vermont Agency of Education.
- Home study students are not eligible for AEL services except as supported by High School Completion Program reimbursements. Home study students are essentially enrolled in a secondary course of study, which makes them ineligible for VAEL grant-supported services. VAEL providers should consult with the AOE if approached by a home study student seeking VAEL services.
- Those who have student visas types F-1 and M-1: Both programs require that the accepting United States school or university be approved by the Federal government to accept international students. The plan for the student will outline their access to their education, and will not include access to Adult Education and Literacy services, which is not a “public or private school.” Those with student visas must meet a standard of English language proficiency and are required to be enrolled in a school. Therefore, those with student visas are not eligible for VAEL services.
- Those with exchange visitor program type J-1 visas may be professors, college or secondary school students, au pairs, teachers – there are 15 categories of participants. [See fact sheet](#). They also have a program plan that will describe any access to education, which will likely not include AEL.
- Those with F-2, M-2, and J-2 visas: these visas are issued to spouses and dependents accompanying visa type F, M, and J holders.
- Those with B-1 or B-2 visitor visas are allowed to participate in particular activities, not including study.
- VAEL providers may consult with the AOE if anyone with a temporary visa seeks services.

VAEL grantees will establish intake and enrollment policies and procedures that welcome learners and establish a strong commitment, support, and clear expectations for participation, making full use of personalized learning plans and enabling learners to make fully informed decisions regarding program options. The process will be designed to reduce the risk of early withdrawal before goals are achieved and to identify an appropriate educational program that allows students to take full advantage of VAEL services. VAEL enrollment may occur as early as initial orientation, but must occur no later than the point at which a definable service has been rendered (e.g. assessment). Skill level assessments in reading, writing, math and/or ESOL must be administered to all learners, who receive 12 hours or more of instruction in the State’s

adult education program with a test that the United States Department of Education (US DOE) Secretary has determined is suitable for use in the National Reporting System (NRS).

VAEL staff may assist learners in overcoming barriers to participation by making referrals to appropriate social service agencies and partners identified through WIOA as part of the One-Stop system in Vermont. Using VAEL grant funds to directly provide support services should always be a last option. Such direct provision of services may be appropriate when the absence of such services would severely inhibit learner participation and such services are not available elsewhere.

Parties will comply with all relevant federal and state laws and regulations, including the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of WIOA, the Fair Employment and Housing Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted in order to make all aspects of American society more accessible to people with disabilities, whether physical or psychological. Centers must provide physical access to and within the building where learners come for services. Also, under the ADA, all programs are required to provide “reasonable accommodations” to learners with documentation of diagnosed disabilities. Those disabilities include both physical and learning disabilities. VAEL is committed to providing support services that are in keeping with our vision and mission and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Therefore, centers will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations when it can be demonstrated that doing so would not fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity being provided. It is the participant's responsibility to request accommodations and to provide the necessary documentation in support of the request. However, many participants may not be privy to the rights afforded them and should be informed of protections under the ADA.

B. Instruction

FY20 will be a transition year as the Vermont AEL system phases out the Equipped for the Future (EFF) standards, and the CCRS and [EQS transferable skills](#) replace the EFF standards in Vermont which are reflected in the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. The CCRS are a category of the Common Core State Standards Initiative, which Vermont’s State Board of Education adopted as part of the Education Quality Standards (EQS). VAEL providers should let CCRS guide their work as much as possible in FY20 and work in collaboration with schools to identify the transferable skills and other [proficiency-based graduation requirements](#) that need to be addressed in High School Completion Program personalized learning plans that lead to graduation. DataWorks will no longer track EFF services beginning July 1, 2020. VAEL providers may request technical assistance from the AOE during this transition.

The standards and proficiencies to be used are defined specifically as follows:

College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education:

- English Language Arts and Literacy
 - Reading Standards
 - Writing Standards
 - Speaking and Listening Standards
 - Language Standards
 - Reading Standards: Foundational Skills K-5
- Mathematics

Equipped for the Future Performance Continua for (See note above indicating that EFF will no longer be used in the VAEL system after FY20):

- Solve Problems and Make Decisions
- Cooperate with Others
- Resolve Conflict and Negotiate
- Take Responsibility for Learning
- Learn Through Research
- Use Information and Communications Technology

Equipped for the Future standards (no performance continua available) for:

- Observe Critically
- Advocate and Influence
- Guide Others

Equipped for the Future Teaching and Learning Cycle:

Step 1 - Determine individual learner's goals and purposes and identify the Standards that will help him/her achieve them. Identify the learner's prior knowledge about these goals and Standards.

Step 2 - In a group, identify a shared interest, purpose or goal and determine the group's prior knowledge of this topic. Identify the Standard that will help the group address this shared goal. Make clear the connection between the class focus and individuals' needs.

Step 3 - Use the EFF Standard to design a learning activity to address the real-life goal of the learners.

Step 4 - With learners, develop a plan to capture evidence and report learning.

Step 5 - Carry out the learning activity.

Step 6 - Observe and document evidence of performance of the Standard.

Step 7 - With learners, evaluate and reflect on how what was learned is transferable to real-life situations.

Step 8 - With learners, determine next steps to help them meet their goals (return to Step 1 and/or 2).

As part of a personalized learning approach, VAEL instruction will be offered in a variety of schedules, contexts, and formats, and delivered primarily through classes and group programs for intermediate and advanced learners, with supplemental individual instruction as needed. The lowest skilled learners (NRS 1-2) may primarily receive individual instruction, with intermittent opportunities to come together with peers. **Only trained and well-qualified instructors will provide AEL instruction. Volunteers may supplement student learning experiences, but may not substitute for qualified instructors.**

In order to continue receiving VAEL services, an adult learner must demonstrate a gain on approved standardized assessments in reading, writing, mathematics or ESOL equivalent to one grade level for every 75 hours of instruction. *If such progress cannot be demonstrated, the provider will assist the learner in obtaining appropriate services that can best meet their individual needs.*

C. Student assessment – see the FY20 Assessment Policy

Please read the assessment policy carefully and comply with all requirements. The *DataWorks* system is programmed to disallow assessments that are not in compliance.

Progress assessment is considered valid if the student has received a minimum of 40 hours of instruction and a minimum of 45 days has passed since the previous assessment. Contact hours that may be counted toward progress assessment hours are defined as follows:

“Hours of instruction or instructional activity that the participant receives from the program. Instructional activity includes any program-sponsored activity designed to promote learning in the program curriculum, such as classroom instruction, assessment, tutoring, or participation in a learning lab. Time spent on assessment can be counted only if the assessment is designed to inform placement decisions, assess progress, or inform instruction. Time used simply to administer tests, such as the GED tests, cannot be counted as instructional activity.” – *NRS TA Guide, page 46.*

Where the WorkKeys assessment is available, testing opportunities should be offered on a regular basis and in accordance to local demand. VAEL centers will also provide instruction designed to prepare students for the WorkKeys assessments.

VAEL centers may offer the WorkKeys certifications only in compliance with the guidelines of the publisher, ACT, and only using assessment proctors who have successfully completed the necessary training and are therefore certified as WorkKeys test administrators. The examining entity is authorized to collect fees for test administration, which will be set by the Vermont Agency of Education.

D. Credentials

GED - The General Educational Development (GED) Tests are available in Vermont through the VAEL centers and a few additional sites. Testing opportunities should be available on a regular basis and in accordance with local demand. VAEL centers also provide instruction designed to prepare students for the GED Tests. It is essential to the integrity of the GED Testing program that instructional responsibilities are kept separate from test administration functions.

Therefore, persons instructing potential candidates for the GED Tests cannot be appointed as GED Chief Examiners, Examiners, or proctors, or otherwise have any access to any secure GED testing materials.

All GED testing centers must adhere to the [GED Program Policy Manual](#).

The examining entity is authorized to collect fees for test administration. Computer-based tests are priced by GED Testing Service.

VADP - The Vermont Adult Diploma Program is funded and administered by the Vermont Agency of Education (under the authority of 16 V.S.A. § 945.) The Adult Diploma Program is an assessment process administered by the Agency through which an individual can identify a pathway to earning a secondary credential. This process is accessible to individuals 20 years of age and older seeking a high school diploma or individuals 16 years of age and older seeking a GED.

HSCP - The purpose of the High School Completion Program is to provide learners, ages 16 and up, whether enrolled or not enrolled in a high school, with educational services of the scope and rigor needed for the attainment of a high school diploma through flexible pathways to graduation. The 2006 Vermont Legislature established the HSCP through 16 V.S.A. §1049, and the 2009 Legislature amended that statute to allow enrolled students to participate. The 2013 Vermont Legislature removed the age cap under 16 V.S.A. § 943. See High School Completion Program Policy Manual.

III. ACCOUNTABILITY & CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Continuous Improvement Process

AOE requires that funded providers demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement. Performance targets have been established, described below, and shall serve as indicators of that improvement. Performance will be measured against established targets and may be used as a basis for compliance determinations. If performance targets are not met, a continuous improvement plan (CIP) must be submitted and approved by the AOE. When appropriate, technical assistance for the CIP process will be made available. Technical assistance will be developed and executed through a collaborative process involving the provider and AOE staff.

Indicators of Performance

Grant performance for the program year July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 will be measured in accordance with WIOA Section 116(b)(2)(A). As stewards of federal and state funds, AOE must

ensure continuous improvement in performance outcomes. AOE has agreed with the US Department of Education, during performance measure negotiations, to meet the overall Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) target of 38% for the program year 2019-2020. The AOE additionally requires that each local provider meet performance levels on the Indicators of Performance below so as to contribute to Vermont’s overall success in meeting or exceeding the agreed upon MSG. Providers must also demonstrate continuous improvement in local performance targets.

<u>Indicator 1: Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs)</u>	FY20
Demonstrated improvements in Educational Functioning Levels (EFL) in reading, writing, numeracy, and English language acquisition.	Percentage of Students who increase their EFL based on NRS Approved Assessment.
Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level 1	41%
ABE Level 2	39%
ABE Level 3	39%
ABE Level 4	42%
Adult Secondary Education (ASE) Level 5	42%
ASE Level 6	36%
English as a Second Language (ESL) Level 1	32%
ESL Level 2	32%
ESL Level 3	36%
ESL Level 4	36%
ESL Level 5	32%
ESL Level 6	26%
Program exit and entry into postsecondary education/training during the program year (this is another type of EFL)	Tracked by providers through survey method and by the AOE through a data match with the National Student Clearinghouse – no specific target for this indicator though counts toward MSG overall target.

Indicator 1: Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs)	FY20
Attained a secondary school diploma/recognized equivalent	Tracked by the Subrecipient – no specific target for this indicator though counts toward MSG overall target.
Vermont’s overall MSG target	38%

The MSG indicator is only one of six primary performance indicators under WIOA. For program years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, the U.S. Department of Education, OCTAE “. . . will continue to collect baseline data for [the remaining] five primary performance indicators during this period. . . ‘Baseline’ indicators will not be used in the end of the year performance calculations and will not be used to determine failure to achieve adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions; however, States will collect and report on all primary indicators of performance, including those that have been designated as ‘baseline.’ ” (*Program Memorandum OCTAE 18-2*).

Indicator 2: Employment and education/training measures (targets to be determined)	FY20
Employment second quarter after exit	Baseline
Employment fourth quarter after exit	Baseline
Median earnings second quarter after exit	Baseline
Credential Attainment Rate (the following three measures)	Baseline
a. Obtain secondary credential and enrolled in postsecondary education while enrolled or within one year of exit	
b. Obtain secondary credential and obtain employment while enrolled or within one year of exit	
c. Obtain a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within one year of exit	
The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers	Baseline

Indicator 3: Additional performance targets for productivity required by AOE	FY20
Total students served (this number will be determined with provider after awards are made)	#
Percentage of students qualified for inclusion in federal report	45%
Percentage of students with baseline assessment	90%
Percentage of students with progress assessment	50%

Learner goals are defined as the reasons a learner has chosen to participate in adult education. Every learner shall have at least one goal established. The status of goals, whether open, met, or cancelled, will be a basis for continuous improvement monitoring. Learner goals are to be considered as the intellectual property of the learner and therefore may be revised or cancelled only with the consent of the learner. Upon successful completion of a goal, it may be shown as met in *DataWorks* without learner consent, but such indication must be accompanied by appropriate documentation.

Performance expectations

In order to track actual performance against established productivity and learner achievement targets, providers are required to enter data on every VAEL participant in the centralized electronic database. This database is referred to as *DataWorks* and is a secure, web-based system designed specifically for the collection and reporting of all VAEL data. *DataWorks* is the repository for data regarding demographics, enrollment, and student goals, services, assessment and achievements. It is designed for “real time” data entry, which is the expected norm, and data must be entered at least bi-weekly. VAEL full-service centers must maintain auditable, hard copy student files as documentation of student achievements recorded in *DataWorks*. However, *DataWorks* is the sole source of performance data relative to established targets.

The State will evaluate compliance with grant requirements based on periodic site visits and monitoring of pertinent learner, administrative, and fiscal records of AEL grantees. Compliance determinations may be based on performance targets identified as continuous improvement measures. Compliance determinations shall be based on demonstrated adherence to these policies, and to the terms of the current statewide grant describing operational procedures, full range of services, and vision, mission and common practice. The State will notify grantees of identified performance problems that could jeopardize continuation of the grant award in writing, and will provide the grantee a reasonable opportunity to take corrective action and to demonstrate compliance with 1) implementation of the vision, mission and common practice and 2) the full range of services. If grantee fails to correct performance and achieve compliance with requirements within six months of notification, the grant may be terminated. The grant can also be immediately terminated due to gross misconduct. In such an event, prior to or at the

time of termination, grantee will be provided with written notice of such termination, including specific identification of the misconduct.

IV. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The ongoing professional development of VAEL staff is essential to the success of VAEL programs and therefore, our adult learners. In order to fulfill its responsibility for providing professional development opportunities to the field, the Vermont Agency of Education has dedicated staff and financial resources to this effort. In order to ensure that these resources are fully utilized, the State has established the following policy expectations for professional learning for VAEL partners.

VAEL teachers, assessors, plan managers, and program administrators will have an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) in progress and updated/revised at least annually. There is an [acceptable format for an IPDP](#) provided on the AOE's website. Other formats that address all of the following components are acceptable:

- self-assessment;
- setting PD goals to enhance the individuals' skills or knowledge that are also aligned with the strategic goals of the organization;
- creating an action plan to achieve the goals;
- implementing the plan; and,
- documenting progress with reflection/evaluation on progress and revision as necessary.

VAEL providers will support their staff in the development of professional development goals that connect to individual needs and interests, the priorities of the VAEL system, and ways of better serving adult learners. Supervisors will hold staff accountable for developing and making progress on the IPDP. Progress on the plan must be documented at minimum annually. Supervisors may exclude certain staff (for example, those on a limited contract or some support staff) from this requirement by documenting the reason in the employee's file.

The IPDP will be used to inform regional and/or statewide planning of professional development opportunities. As such, IPDPs will be available for review by the Professional Development Coordinator at the Agency of Education as they are established or updated. Supervisors of staff should ensure that copies of the IPDP are submitted on an annual basis.

All new staff in adult education and literacy programs will successfully complete the online courses, "Orientation to Adult Education and Literacy in Vermont" and "*Equipped For the Future* Orientation for Vermont" within six months of hire. Supervisors may exclude certain staff (for example, those on a limited contract or some support staff) from this requirement by documenting the reason in the employee's file. Completion of these online courses is required for participation in additional professional development opportunities.

V. FUNDING FORMULA

In October 1992 a task force of representatives of VAEL providers, libraries, human services, corrections, and colleges met to develop a needs-based rationale for distribution of VAEL funds. Their recommendation was amended and endorsed by the Vermont Literacy Board in February, 1993 and the State Board of Education in April, and became Rule 2410-11 in 1993. The following year the Rule was amended slightly and this version continues in use.

The formula was developed to “balance service delivery throughout the state” with funding linked to the need for services at the county level. A base amount was incorporated in order to ensure a basic level of services for each county and to acknowledge access and small population issues. The formula was designed to be responsive to the needs of adults and give weight to populations most likely to demand services. Great care was taken to avoid linking the distribution of funds to providers.

The formula, outlined in State Rule 2410.1-3 consists of three parts:

1. Base of \$30,000 to each county;
2. 70% of balance for allocation on basis of statewide need – the need of the county relative to all counties in the state (State Need);
3. 30% of balance allocated on basis of comparative density of need within each county (County Burden).

Indicators of need for services, used in both the State Need and County Burden sections of the formula are:

- 15% ... un- or under-employed persons without a high school diploma;
- 50% ... persons 16 or older without a high school diploma;
- 20% ... persons living at 125% of poverty;
- 15% ... persons in categories of offenders, mothers without high school diplomas, and for whom English is a second language.

Data for indicators are updated annually with the most current information available.

- Population: census data or most recent population estimates published by the Vermont Department of Health.
- Several data categories are based on census and therefore not updated annually:
 - persons 16 or older without a high school diploma;
 - persons living at 125% of poverty;
 - persons for whom English is a second language.
- Data for three indicators is available on a more regular basis from other State agencies:
 - un- or under-employed persons without a high school diploma;
 - offenders;
 - mothers without high school diplomas.

GLOSSARY

Adult Basic Education (ABE) – Describes students and services at NRS levels 1-4, which includes *ABE Beginning Literacy*, *ABE Beginning Basic Education*, *ABE Intermediate Low*, and *ABE Intermediate High*. These levels are roughly equivalent to grade levels preK-8.

Adult Secondary Education (ASE) – Describes students and services at NRS levels 5-6, which includes *ASE Low* and *ASE High*. These levels are roughly equivalent to grades 9-12.

College and Career Readiness – A student possesses the foundational skills and learning strategies necessary to begin studies in a career pathway and has the ability to enter the workforce or pursue post-secondary education or training without the need for remediation.

College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) – These are the academic standards that define college and career readiness in English Language Arts and Literacy (ELA), and Mathematics. These standards consist of a subset of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) adopted by Vermont for use in the PreK-12 system in 2010.

Distance Education - Formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time or both for the majority of the instructional period. (Vermont's Adult Education and Literacy program does not have a Distance Education policy.)

Educational Functioning Level (EFL) – There are six ABE EFLs and six ESL levels in the National Reporting System. An EFL is achieved when a learner completes or advances one or more educational functioning levels from the starting level measured at entry into the program. The Educational Functioning Level Table and other NRS-specific information is available in the [National Reporting System \(NRS\) Technical Assistance Guide](#).

Equipped for the Future (EFF) – The 16 EFF content standards define the knowledge and skills adults need in order to successfully carry out their roles as parents and family members, citizens and community members, and workers. These 16 skills support effective performance in the home, community, and workplace.

General Educational Development (GED) - A group of four subject tests which, when passed, certify that the test taker has high-school level academic skills. In Vermont, successful completion results in a State GED certificate. However, completers are still eligible for high school diploma-related services such as free access to career and technical education.

Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) – Documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards a recognized credential or employment. Title II-relevant documented progress is defined in Program Memorandum OCTAE 17-2 as:

- a. Documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary education level; and,
- b. Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

National Reporting System (NRS) – The outcome-based reporting system for the State-administered, federally funded AEL program, which was developed by the U.S. Department of Education.

Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) – A plan developed by the student, a representative of the AEL system and, when appropriate, a parent or legal guardian and a representative of the local educational agency (LEA) that defines the scope and rigor of academic and experiential opportunities for the student to attain college and career readiness. The plan shall be developmentally appropriate and reflect the student’s emerging abilities, aptitude and disposition.