

## Vermont Public Broadcasting Service Teacher/Parent Survey

### Purpose

The Vermont Public Broadcasting Service (VT PBS) Teacher/Parent Survey was created in order to gain a better understanding of how the Agency of Education/VT PBS partnership to provide programming and supplemental materials were used by educators and parents as they rapidly pivoted to remote learning due to COVID-19. The data from this survey is informing decisions to improve these supports for the fall.

### Introduction

In April 2020, the AOE announced its partnership with VT PBS to support Continuity of Learning for students and school communities. This partnership provides access to free educational programming via television broadcasts. Additional supplemental resources have been selected or developed by AOE staff and Vermont PBS, both on-air and online. The curriculum supported PreK through grade 12 programming, is aligned to national and state standards, and includes interactive lessons as well as suggested activities for educators, students, and families. The AOE and PBS committed to reaching students who do not have access to broadband and providing them with engaging learning opportunities through the 24/7, Main, and Plus channels. Through collaboration with partners at the Department of Public Service, the AOE successfully advocated for cable providers to carry additional PBS channels.

### Survey Data Summary

Approximately 200 parents and educators responded to the survey with the majority being educators. Overall, the reaction of respondents was very positive regarding the opportunity to access VT PBS programming and supplemental resources to support remote learning. Since the Agency is particularly interested in how PBS can be integrated into distance learning by teachers, the information below specifically focuses on educator responses. Data points of interest:

1. Grade levels taught by respondents: 11% preschool teachers, 48% elementary teachers, 20% middle school teachers, and 21% high school teachers;
2. Seventy-four percent of educators did not create PBS Learning Media accounts;
3. Digital resources were identified as most helpful followed by streaming and printed resources;
4. On-air broadcasts were identified as one of the least helpful resources;

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5. Fifty-three percent of surveyed educators included PBS programs in their lesson plans; those who did not cited lack of time to explore programs, a feeling of being overwhelmed, and amount of screen time as barriers;
6. Forty-nine percent of respondents identified internet access as an obstacle while 20% noted lack of a digital device as an issue;
7. Social emotional programming was used most often; social studies and science were the next most frequently accessed;
8. Considering the future, additional social emotional programming and programs with explicit connections to transferable skills were most requested;
9. The 9-11 AM time slot was noted as the best for broadcast, however the majority of educators preferred on-demand viewing; and
10. Numerous educators commented that they plan to use VT PBS programming in the fall.

### **Focus Group: Digging Deeper into the Data**

Although there were over forty volunteers for the focus groups, only a handful of educators were able to attend the session. They represented a broad range of grade levels and provided a finer level of detail than the data from the survey. PBS and AOE staff facilitated the group and participants were encouraged to build on one another's ideas.

Educators discussed students' attention spans and requested shorter clips of programs. They asked for the ability to search by content area or standard and agreed that a focus on social justice is important at this time. Participants also requested professional learning opportunities about how to effectively use PBS Learning Media. The PBS Learning Media platform allows educators to search by topic and filter by grade level, subject area, and resource type. Many of the identified needs could essentially be met through PBS Learning Media.

A review of AOE-developed supplemental documents revealed the need for additional information regarding explicit connections between programs and academic content. Educators suggested that content rather than the program be in the forefront. Additionally, there was a request for similar documents on how to strategically incorporate PBS into the classroom for the upper grades.

### **Goals for the Fall 2020**

As a result of a review of the data and taking into consideration the recommendations from the focus group, the following goals have been developed for the coming year.

1. Identify technology issues through the AOE technology survey;
2. Develop tutorials (videos) and host webinars to inform educators about advantages of creating PBS Learning Media accounts;
3. Leverage Mister Chris & Friends to support new and ongoing social/emotional learning opportunities through the arts via music;

4. Clarify media literacy best practices in relation to screen time for elementary, middle, and high school students;
5. Rename the PBS At-Home webpage to reflect use of programming and supplemental resources for learning both at home and in school;
6. Identify connections between programs and Vermont’s transferable skills, social/racial justice, and social emotional skills;
7. Refine the “one-pager” for programs and related content keeping the content in the forefront;
8. Organize information for teachers by content rather than airtime; and
9. Create an educator advisory group to guide decisions.

### **Long-Term Goals**

The AOE and PBS are exploring the opportunity to support more streaming on-demand programs to increase usability and integration into classrooms and curriculum; opportunities for partnering with local organizations to share and/or create content to fill gaps in programming (e.g., virtual field trips, live Online Viewing Events and Engagement, or webinars); and strategies for enabling Vermont educators to create virtual, streamable content, particularly for mathematics. AOE and PBS will continue to collaborate over the coming year in order to support Continuity of Learning and improve educational opportunities for all Vermont students.