

# Equity & Excellence



## Action Planning Guide

*"The litmus test of a good school is not its innovations but rather the solid, purposeful, enduring results it tries to obtain for its students."*

- Carl Glickman

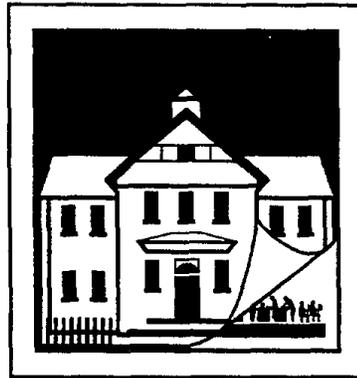


Vermont Department of Education  
1998

# Equity & Excellence



## Action Planning Guide



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The Vermont Department of Education is committed to ensuring that all its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public, and all activities and programs are nondiscriminatory in design, application and performance.

# Successful Schools Do Not Happen by Accident

**S**uccessful schools do not happen by accident - they are the result of many people planning together, working together, and taking shared responsibility for the success of all students.

Schools that sustain their focus on improved student performance are where you'll find high achieving and motivated students, committed staff, involved parents, and supportive communities. In short, you will find excellence and equity.

Excellence is our goal. To reach it, we will need to focus on increasing the number of students who meet or exceed high standards. However, this will not be enough. We must also focus on equity by looking at how different groups of students perform. We need to be sure that, as we increase the number of students who meet or exceed high standards, we decrease the gaps in academic achievement between different groups of students. The goal is excellence *for all students*.

Action planning combines commitment, collaboration and continuous effort toward achieving excellence and equity by focusing on student performance results and other indicators that are closely associated with improved student learning.

This action planning guide is designed to help all schools improve their action planning efforts. The districts with experience in action planning will find informative tips to fine-tune their work. Those districts just beginning will be able to use this guide as a nuts and bolts tool kit.

This guide is a first edition. We decided to limit its scope and depth. Its development has been an ambitious task. Had we tried to create an exhaustive guide, we would have been overwhelmed by the complexity of the task. We pass on similar advice to schools. Be selective and modest in your first attempts at action planning. Choose goals and strategies that will have widespread support and are likely to have a significant impact in a short time.

There are many different goals to consider when designing an action plan. Above all, we must remember that all action-planning goals share the commitment that every student can achieve high standards.



Marc Hull  
Commissioner



Marge Petit,  
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*The following proposed rules are the only requirements set forth in the Equal Educational Opportunity Act (Act 60) regarding the action planning process. This guide and the accompanying materials are intended to provide guidance and suggested processes, and optional formats for schools to use as they choose. The Action Planning Guide is intended to meet the diverse needs of schools across the state. Use those portions that best meet your needs.*

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## **RULES FOR ACTION PLANNING**

The school shall develop and implement an action plan designed to improve student performance in accordance with the following:

Each school shall develop and maintain an action plan that is designed to improve performance of all students in the school. For the purposes of this section, "a school" shall mean an individual public school building or combination of public school buildings with one administration. A school district may choose to develop a combined plan for some or all of the schools within the district. In the case of a combined plan, it shall reflect the different needs of individual schools.

The plan shall be developed with the involvement of school board members, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members.

The plan shall be developed using student performance data obtained from state and local assessments and other information related to student performance such as, but not limited to, dropout rates, retention rates, course enrollment patterns, and graduation rate.

At least annually, the school shall review the plan for its effectiveness toward meeting the stated goals and revise as necessary based upon updated student performance data.

The school board shall approve the plan and any revision thereof and ensure that the community is informed annually of the school's progress toward meeting the goals of the plan.

The plan shall contain:

- a. Goals and objectives for improved student learning; and
- b. Educational strategies and activities specifically designed to achieve these goals.

*(Approved for the Rulemaking Process by the State Board of Education on April 14, 1998)*

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