

Vermont Principals' Association
 Proficiency-Based Learning Testimony to House Education February 6, 2019

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To: House Committee Education
From: Jay Nichols, VPA Executive Director
Date: February 5, 2019
Subject: Proficiency-Based Learning and Graduation Update

Proficiency Based Questions

Table Questions:

Where are you in relationship to proficiency-based education?

PBL fully implemented	Partly Implemented	Not being implemented
44	71	8

Does your local high school have proficiency-based graduation requirements

Yes	No	Partly
56	13	26

Is your report card system proficiency or standards-based?

Yes	No	Partially/Hybrid
63	14	31

Do you assign letter grades to students?

Yes	No	In some grades, not others
30	77	26

Summary Notes:

- The vast majority of schools have either partly or completely implemented proficiency-based education.
- Most high schools have proficiency-based graduation requirements either partly or fully in place for graduation.
- Most report cards are proficiency or standards based.
- Many schools have moved away from assigning traditional letter grades

Challenges Themes:

- Developing community and parental support
- Pushback from staff and faculty resistant to changing
- Trying to change the system that everyone knows
- Lack of Leadership from the AOE
- Developing a reporting system
- Communication at every level

Success Themes:

- Student and teacher clarity around essential learning
- More focus on student growth
- More students engaged in learning (not just grades)
- Better understanding of what kids know and are able to do

Challenges and Successes Table Quotes from the Field Raw Information:

Challenges	Successes
Determining exactly what proficiencies will be measuring, and at what grade levels, at the elementary level.	Proficiency based learning works well with our population as they are typically alternative assessment. We have one student where proficiency-based education was made easier using a standards system for summatives and teacher made formatives
Continuously monitoring the progress students make toward PBL so that adequate time and resources can continuously circle back to each individual student and track their learning toward the PBL	I think biggest success is having an articulated curriculum at the high school. We are now able to name what the skills-based outcomes are in each

<p>standards. Selecting and reporting the parents with an adequate system a student's progress toward the PBL standards.</p>	<p>course and how they connect together. There is more focus on skills, more focused instruction, and more equity in outcomes using a more criterion-based approach versus normative.</p>
<p>It is extremely cumbersome for athletics eligibility! Probably a systems thing but the most user unfriendly that I have had so far.</p>	<p>Student-led conferences, slowly changing thinking -reporting, awards, slow-changing thinking</p>
<p>Clearing up misconceptions with parents, creating equity and consistency of practice in each and EVERY classroom.</p>	<p>We graduated our first senior class at Twinfield last year (2018) with a proficiency-based transcript.</p>
<p>Scores can feel subjective. Teacher ratings of student levels of proficiency can vary widely.</p>	<p>Students really understand the purpose of proficiency-based learning and are clearer in the expectations for achieving proficiency and what they need to be able to do in order to get there. Parents push back is a continuous struggle.</p>
<p>Working with staff to change thinking, paradigms, and practice.</p>	<p>We have seen successes with students thinking more about what they need to learn rather than the grade they need to get on a n assessment.</p>
<p>The challenges were mainly based in student, staff, parent, and community pushback regarding changes to assessment. A new grading system was put in place by the district, before I arrived for my first year as principal, before it was thoroughly designed, piloted, or built out from a systems perspective. Needless to say, it was difficult to communicate a non-existent system to parents and students in a systematic manner that would alleviate their levels of concern.</p>	<p>Deeper learning opportunities.</p>
<p>Communicating this to teachers, students, families, boards, and everyone else. Transitioning to systems and structures that support the work (Power Teacher was touted as the answer to all our concerns and wasn't so we are looking at a shift to yet another grading platform next year with JumpRope. Transitioning some grades while not transitioning others. Developing parallel systems as we transition (two transcripts, two programs of study, etc.) and in a small system, who does that work? Changing the</p>	<p>Lots of progress with establishing content area proficiencies and transferable skills</p>

<p>instructional practices and support structures to support students who struggle with meeting proficiency. Meeting proficiency looks different than passing a course with a 70 and we don't have all students doing even that. The transition has to be supported at the elementary levels and that work is just beginning in our district. That's probably enough for now. My fear is that the legislation prompted the transition to proficiency and most of us (administrators) believe in the underlying premise that traditional school isn't adequately preparing students for the world they'll encounter but each high school is doing this work in isolation with their own proficiencies and ideas of what the transferable skills look like. What is proficient in my system may not be in another system. That's a lot of redundancy.</p>	
<p>The VT principals involved in the League of Innovative Schools met in NH yesterday and shared resources but that's only a handful of the schools in VT. I think many of us are suffering from proficiency fatigue right now and tired of defending these shifts to all the stakeholders. Successes are harder to list right now but here's one. This shift has opened the door for other necessary changes such as changing our schedule, redesigning courses, etc., that my very senior faculty has been resistant to begin. Thanks for asking.</p>	<p>We planned well and accessed Marzano Research. We have better clarity. Seeing students understand what they know and are able to do.</p>
<p>The biggest challenge with transitioning to a proficiency-based model has been getting teachers to move away from old grading practices and wanting to continue doing what they've always done.</p>	<p>Love Proficiency based- love looking at individual growth, not comparison growth. Love the conversations we have with families about attaining a skill by the end of a year- that progress reporting is based on where they are in moving toward a years outline of outcomes.</p>
<p>Incomplete or inadequate curriculum and assessments.</p>	<p>Students become more focused on the learning than getting a grade</p>
<p>Parent resistance.</p>	
<p>Students lose the motivation to learn the material the first time because they can continue to try later- this slows the learning process for many kids who need an extra push to engage. It is a huge challenge for a student who gets the material the first time and they</p>	<p>A success has been increased clarity as to learning targets, performance indicators, and learning expectations</p>

Vermont Principals' Association
 Proficiency-Based Learning Testimony to House Education February 6, 2019

do not have differentiation at the HS level to move on to another class part way through the year.	
This report card does a poor job of communicating to parents how their children are performing- which is the whole point of a report card.	Working with Great Schools Partnership and intentional time devoted with our curriculum coaches to look at curriculum and alignment.
Moving students past "good enough" mentality to take the time to review and reassess to gain proficiency.	teachers, through district PLC's, are receiving training on PBL
The challenges are colossal. How we grade kids is tied to people's sense of fairness - and any changes feel - and are - very high stakes. Add to this ethical dimension the fact that gradebooks are very public now, and it means that every granular detail of how a teacher grades is public and open for discussion and debate; in this regard, the scale of change from past practice is hard to over-emphasize.	Proficiency growth demonstrated through the use of monthly status reports students submit to set learning goals and indicate learning strategies. Helps students reflect on what is working and what needs work.
At this point it will be getting the kids and parents to understand at the 'graduation' level when a student does not reach proficiency and needs more time to complete their studies.	Need more time on assessments and tracking transferable skills. Good progress with changing grading practices.
Another challenge is that the legislation allows great latitude: you can completely up-end how you do school, or ... not. There's so much latitude and ability for local interpretation, that it is therefore impossible for AOE to offer guidance. If everyone is doing it differently, how do you offer a model that all can adopt?	Our successes are that we have a system for entering proficiencies and transferable skills.
Another challenge is that the discrete sets of graduation standards are written very differently. Math and science are very content specific. English has very little content specificity at all, and is just skills. How to create a system of grading and reporting that allows for such very different kinds of scope/sequence? Very difficult.	We have had a great deal of success with implementing PBL. Partly it has been because of the expectations of the administration that it will be done and there is no room for negotiating.
Culture Change with students and families. Loss of familiar grading system. Creating a proficiency-based transcript	More focused classroom-level assessment, more clarity on the importance of learning over habits, better assurances that our graduates are

	ready for their next step. Challenges: Community obsession about grades (even though we still have them)
Our challenges are around what skills/learning targets have to be met to move from one level to another. Also, reporting out to families has been a challenging process.	Proficiency based learning works well with our population as they are typically alternative assessment. We have one student where proficiency-based education was made easier using a standards system for summatives and teacher made formatives.
Our greatest challenge is finding the time to do the learning to be able to truly move to proficiency-based learning. People tend to say they are using this model, but in reality, have only made a few minor changes to their past practices.	I am confident we have a positive system in place ready to use.
Gaining community understanding and acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - K-4 report cards are proficiency-based report cards/reporting. - 5-12 report cards still use letter grades; however, we include (each quarter) a narrative on the proficiencies that are being addressed/included in grading in each course. <p>We have school board approved BMU Graduation Proficiencies</p>
Educating teacher and the community. This a fairly big shift in thinking.	We are beginning to make progress as a building and system, although FAR more training needs to occur on the teacher and classroom level.
The culture change for all involved. Also, working to get staff to teach differently to take full advantage of the system.	Winooski has devoted the past 6 years building and implementing our proficiency-based system. We are now fully proficiency-based (with the exception of this year's graduating class). Students graduate when they've passed 6 capstone demonstrations, one for each of our required skills. We have it figured out, are doing it, and now are revising our process. And as of this year's January Expo presentations it is making sense to students.

<p>The PBL shift took away honor roll, Honor's Night, and other academic celebrations, which parents resent. BPL took away academic eligibility standards for sports. Many teachers do not know the difference between SBL and PBL so that has caused a lot of confusion. Our report card has a standards focus, (common core). Teachers do not like teaching to a standard. They have had to abandon their old units of study for a more standards-based approach. Our PD has not provided the skill development necessary for our teachers to feel comfortable with this change.</p>	<p>Based upon the curriculum documents, we have developed K-12 content proficiencies in all content areas.</p>
<p>Determining exactly what proficiencies will be measuring, and at what grade levels, at the elementary level.</p>	<p>Proficiency based learning works well with our population as they are typically alternative assessment. We have one student where proficiency-based education was made easier using a standards system for summatives and teacher made formatives.</p>
<p>TIME---specifically around all of the nuts-and-bolts of effective management/daily record keeping type "stuff".</p>	<p>proficiencies. Teachers have defined the proficiencies that are enduring to meet college and career readiness. Faculty members are talking the same language. Students can personalize their learning to meet well-defined proficiencies.</p>
<p>Setting up a reporting system for PBL</p>	<p>In the places where proficiency-based learning has taken off, it is giving students and families better feedback and allowing for greater student participation and success.</p>
<p>The challenges are retro-fitting a progressive system of education to a system of yester-years. Breaking down the walls to parents that the students are still learning and they will get into college and receive scholarships. Classic bell schedule. Finding the time to implement and tweak changes. Providing Summative re-assessment days for students to show proficiency after remediation.</p>	<p>We worked with Marzano Research over many years to plan the system and get the professional development our teachers needed to do this well. We see much more clarity of course objectives. We see students and teachers working toward course goals, helping individual students as they move at a varied pace. We see more students taking advantage of the</p>

	clarity, making rational decisions with multiple opportunities to reach course expectation. Students are now better at determining what needs to be done to get across the finish line.
A big challenge has been the lack of clarity in the reporting system (JumpRope). Implementation and teacher buy in	The successes are that the students have taken more ownership to their learning. Teachers have created more contact and remediation time in their schedules and classes to support students to meet
We are still trying to find the best PBG system to use, RUHS is using TeacherEase and it is very complicated. Our 3 other sending High schools are still in number grades. I am very confused because I heard from the AOE that PBG is now optional? Or a school can use % grades, as long as they show students mastering proficiency.	Demonstrating growth with transferable skills using monthly status reports submitted by students to set learning goals
training staff, students, parents, and having 4 other schools on different levels/systems.	It is challenging to inform families and train teachers at a quick pace-grading on both sides of the system is tough.
Grades 5-12 moving from letter grades completely to proficiency based grading. We are starting this work and will place emphasis on this in the next year or two.	We are developing a school wide rubric for the implementation of our BMU Graduation Proficiencies. A draft of the rubric is due prior to February break (2019).
Informing the community of our changes.	We've found that a hybrid approach for assessment works best for us - a combination of traditional grades and 1-4 assessments on proficiencies.
Educating parents that colleges will accept students with a proficiency-based report card.	Teachers saw the value.
Challenge has been finding a learning system that clearly shows parents their child's progress.	Watching the student progression without the burden of "one test fits all" thought process.
Finding a viable reporting system	need to do to master goals. More opportunities to get all students to goals.
Parent communication and a sound platform for reporting.	As a middle school principal, I have found that students are more engaged

Vermont Principals' Association
 Proficiency-Based Learning Testimony to House Education February 6, 2019

	in their own learning. They know what they need to do to reach proficiency and are striving to work harder for themselves. There is more ownership of their learning.
We continue to struggle with parent-education on the change to proficiency-based grading, though it gets better as time goes on.	We're doing a standards-based system and trying to move forward.
Main thing is it's taking longer than we expected.	Successes have occurred in the required curriculum redesign, this rethinking of what is important to be taught, assessed, & reported has been great. Challenges has been finding a SDS that is flexible enough to report what we want without overwhelming.
Challenges have been that parents and some students have a hard time letting go of the 100-point scale.	new merged district -takes time to align curriculum collaboratively. Early release days and PLC's help
parent buy in and explanation.	We have been very successful in developing a K-12 grade proficiency-based report card for the Twin Valley Schools. The K-5 community easily adopted it as it was not a huge shift from standards-based reporting. community appreciates specific targets
Loss of honor roll and academic celebrations; no more academic criteria tied to grades for sports; parents want traditional grades back because they don't understand it better; teachers don't like teaching to one standard.	We have gone full proficiency and phased it in a year at a time so that the class of 2021 will have a proficiency-based diploma. A transcript has been difficult because we do not give an overall class grade we grade each proficiency.
unclear messaging & support from the AOE; difficulty with grading software that doesn't meet our needs with prof scoring; lack of PD resources around prof based learning, grading & instruction; dif in how schools have implemented & kids transferring.	Success have been that we have leveraged this shift to bring in research-based practices (separating skills from habits etc)
We are having difficulty developing transcripts and report cards.	Great opportunity to rethink what we do, drop the old and step into the future building on what works (continuity vs. change)
At CTE we're all about application. The challenge is designing language and ways of transferring	Clear expectations for students.

Vermont Principals' Association
 Proficiency-Based Learning Testimony to House Education February 6, 2019

application into meeting proficiency-based learning/assessments....	
Setting expectations for students to improve and not "settle" for initial assessments	We were fortunate to have received a Great School's Partnership grant and had lot's of time and support to work with staff. Having said that, when we began our implementation our staff was "all in" which really helped.
Helping parents understand how/why this change is important.	We've had very good success in having our curriculum more viable and guaranteed. We have named what it is that students will learn. This has led to more focused instruction and outcomes for students. More focus on skills.
We have had to overcome resistance from students, parents, and teachers who were ill-informed about what these changes meant for their education. This was due to a new grading system launched without proper planning and an effective system build	Successes are getting teachers to be much more aware of proficiency verses a letter grade;
culture shift	Successes include greater parent understanding and matching their relevance to learning.
It has been very challenging. Moving toward a true PBL model with student voice and choice, flexibility and no grades was determined by our SU to be insurmountable in the timeframe.	Successes in lower grades getting the students more invested in their learning; hope to have the same impact on middle school in time.
Harder to assess. Greatest challenge is explaining to parents and community	Young students have a better understanding of what they are expected to be able to do. Several students continue to be dependent on adults for success.
Getting parents to understand and accept.	It's a comprehensive change to a complex system, and there isn't a simple way to do it all at once. Success happens person by person as they get more educated and comfortable in the foundational principles. It is much easier to move K-6 than 7-12.
No assistance from the state at all-this decision was made without extra funding, templates, answers to specific questions, a model to follow or professional development to participate-schools/district had to do this work on their own	Good support systems for students to reach proficiency eg additional time during school for enrichment, summer school and a revamped assessment week

Vermont Principals' Association
 Proficiency-Based Learning Testimony to House Education February 6, 2019

student and parent understanding/buy in. Grading programs that support PBL tracking and reporting. Transitioning in grade levels in PBL while having grades in traditional system. TRANSCRIPT and colleges	Our SU began in earnest this year with PBL and most teachers are still getting a handle on it. Although, K-4 has really been using PBL for years. Our challenges seem to be more around the grading aspect and moving from one level to another.
No one seems to understand it. Parents are frustrated, Teachers are frustrated, and most of all students are frustrated.	More clarity for students around performance indicators and learning expectations.
We are struggling with Parent buy-in. Our staff is a mixed bag, many believe, some don't but everyone is putting in a good faith effort. It is a heavy lift to transform classroom teaching practices to support the philosophy.	we're working on it.
Getting parents to understand proficiency instead of letter grades.	Professional development and shared understanding about expectations of growth.
Challenges are the time factor for everyone involved.	
Helping parents to understand the foundational beliefs of PBL and what it all means for their children.	While there is general consensus that proficiency-based learning with a focus on transferable skills is essential for student success, changing instructional practices and long held beliefs is a huge challenge--for families, teachers, and students.
Parent buy in has been a challenge	Student progress, increased student ownership
A large challenge is in the reporting system. We use JumpRope, but the system as a whole is lacking.	Teachers have designed learning opportunities that go deeper and assessments are more meaningful and relevant.
Lack of staff understanding and lack of buy in from parents and teachers.	Successes is that is has helped teachers in a large SU work towards aligning curriculum.
Parental support.	Cost and resources for teachers

Vermont Principals' Association
 Proficiency-Based Learning Testimony to House Education February 6, 2019

<p>Educating staff about the change in practice across the board: instruction, assessment, and support processes; Educating parents; creating a PBL report card that is accurately reporting student progress.</p> <p>Some parents feel it is hard for kids to be intrinsically motivated by this system.</p> <p>Parent understanding, lack of urgency to change, competing initiatives</p>	<p>Successes: students recognize that they're trying to break their personal best, so it's easier to keep them learning, even if they're behind their peers. Challenges: the expectations on teachers has heightened without offering any meaningful respite.</p>
<p>Helping students and parents to understand the shift and changes. Teacher stress, lack of buy in</p>	<p>It is hard for parents to make the change with proficiency-based reporting.</p>
<p>Change of culture. Change of traditional Grading. Transcript from Standards</p>	<p>Clear expectations for students. Focus on learning rather than coverage. Focus on essential content</p>
<p>Legislation allows great latitude, and therefore makes it hard for AOE to offer guidance, and therefore we get little. Grad standards from AOE are written differently: some, like math/science, are very content heavy; others, like ELA = skills focus</p>	<p>went through a vertical alignment process, which is always good, but unnecessary since we had CCSS already in place to vertically align instruction.</p>
<p>There is a lot of "reinventing the wheel" going on instead of unified guidelines on PBL across the state.</p>	<p>Students have assimilated well. Parents have gotten used to the reporting. Teachers, however, have held onto past instructional and assessment practices which has</p>

	muddled the process over the past few years.
The greatest challenge we have had is that we serve 7 different partner schools who are all doing something different! This makes it a real challenge to provide them with grades for their students.	Proficiency system fully developed and operational; Transferrable skills (graduation expectations) taught, and assessed through student demonstrations; Grading system in place. We're in good shape with the design and implementation, now revising.
No guidance or recommended structure, process from AOE..each school figuring it out not their own.....many different versions across all schools in VT	All of our assessments are currently linked to our graduation standards and we use these common grading/reporting agreements across the entire school
It is fine in theory, but horrible on implementation-just as it was in MN and they abandoned it as mandatory and we should follow their lead here as well and make it optional for grading.Huge negative impact on HS students for GPA, NHS and College.	We have school board approved K-12 Curricular Frameworks in all content areas.
Resistance to change and buy-in has been a challenge, also shifting AWAY from grades as compensation	Success has been administrative support, resources (personnel, time, training, expertise)
Report card mechanism, helping parents come along, getting teachers to a place where they allow this to be transformative versus overlaying it on their existing structures and preferences.	Class of 2018 graduated with proficiency based diploma. Passage presentations in grades 8,10 and 12 are in place and have gone well. Many students have created personalized proficiency-based studies through our Renaissance Program. Many students have created personalized projects in our Independent English class that have helped students meet PBGR's.
Not having a curriculum leader in the school district to help lead with the implementation process.	We implemented it in a way that makes sense, the conversations have resulted in some good connections with students and families

<p>Transcripts are still a problem spot. Pushing some students beyond graduation proficiencies has proven difficult. Issues with IEP students meeting requirements or being excused from certain proficiencies is still being worked through.</p>	<p>Parents are very confused about their student's progress and keep reverting back to As,Bs and Cs.</p>
<p>We have no plans to implement pbl and plan to stick with traditional grading</p>	<p>We are an elementary school that reports on progress towards grade level standards. We do indicate proficiency on standards.</p>
<p>Educating families about proficiencies, how it is different from Carnegie Units.</p>	<p>We are having productive department level meetings to identify prioritized performance indicators, Improved focus on student outcomes, focus on MTSS implementation and how that correlates to PBL</p>
<p><u>Transition:</u> because HS is a four-year endeavor, we have students who were graded on a 100-point scale and in a different way still in high school. A challenge has been transitioning while also being fair and transparent with them and their families. This has created the need for a great deal of... <u>2. Communication.</u> LOTS of phone calls and Open House questions. It was a challenge because there were a lot of them,</p>	<p>The biggest successes have been around students who truly work toward proficiency and experience an aha moment.</p>
<p>Students are more engaged in their own learning with PBLs.</p>	<p>We are not fully implemented; however, we have begun to have conversations with parents about proficiency-based learning what it means and what it will look like for our students and parents.</p>
<p></p>	<p>We are trying to move towards this. With the merger, we will get there. There are a lot of moving parts and ppl are all over the place. We are working on a reporting system for next year that will be proficiency-based.</p>
<p>The report card is not specific enough, though, so the information to parents is not helpful, in my opinion.</p>	<p>Last year the district brought in people from Marzano and we did quite a bit of work pre-k-12. The elementary schools</p>

Vermont Principals' Association
 Proficiency-Based Learning Testimony to House Education February 6, 2019

	<p>are in a very different place than middle and high school, so we decided we needed to separate the work out.</p>
<p>I could write volumes in response to this question. And yet, we battled through he challenges, which were almost entirely connect to the lack of true guidance and direction for this initiative from those who put the mandate in place...don't me started!</p>	<p>There are many factors which determine student success.</p>
<p>MANY! including: Trying to bit off more than we can chew at once- MTSS, PBL, other ACT 77 changes including student-led conferences, PLPs and other student-centered approaches. Where to begin, buy-in from resistance, technology difficulties- software that supports when Powerschool really doesn't well. The list is extensive.</p>	<p>Our students and staff are all on board and it's working well.</p>
<p>This is kind of a big question. The biggest challenge is that there is a misunderstanding about PBL and PB Grading and how this is being communicated.</p>	<p>At White River Valley High School in South Royalton our past 18 months have been dominated by the challenges of merging Whitcomb Sr. High School and So Royalton School 9-12. This was accompanied by administrative and office turnover, and significant staff turnover. We have now identified proficiencies for each class and developed performance indicators and are now piloting these. We are exploring reporting options. We have been focusing on this during this year's PD and just returned 10 days ago from visiting another school that is fully implemented. We have met with two software representatives to assess capabilities, but have a good distance to go before making a decision.</p>
<p>Many parents are resistant to the change. They believe they understand the grade system much better than the proficiency learning system.</p>	<p>We implemented a literacy curriculum that nicely balances giving teachers the scope and sequence materials of literacy development, but still allows them flexibility to adapt it into a Waldorf approach. It frees the teacher up to bring the curriculum using a</p>

	<p>proven approach, know where the children are in terms of skill acquisition, know all the bases have been covered, while still incorporating the creativity, story telling, and beauty that is a hallmark of how Waldorf schools approach literacy development.</p>
<p>This year we have not been working on it at least at the elem. levels.</p>	<p>For our success, our staff is beginning to see the benefits of it and, even though there was a lot of anxiety here because of the change, they are starting to embrace it (for the most part).</p>
<p>Communicating to families and the community about the report card</p>	<p>beginning to get staff to change their thinking</p>
<p>Our teachers pride themselves on structuring their curriculum to meet the needs of the students in their classes. They value the independence of being an independent school. This can have the unintended consequence of making them resistant to what they imagine proficiency-based learning is about -- a rigid form, prescribed format, testing, one-size-fits none, etc.</p>	<p>The biggest success is the way in which students can articulate their learning and their progress.</p>
<p>After the staff establishes the PBL mindset, the biggest challenge is just time for developing units with clear connections to standards and with student friendly learning targets, developing assessments where questions are clearly connected to standards and domains, and time needed to grade everything and provide meaningful feedback.</p>	<p>The greatest success we have experienced in Craftsbury is a general philosophical buy in to many aspects of PBL.</p>
<p>Couple of things. First, with the merger going on, we were without a curriculum director last year. The one we had the year before took the lead and was really working with our teachers on the proficiencies but then he was ill and we did not replace because we were a year away from merging. That really stalled us as far as moving forward as most of my time was spent with the merger. A big challenge is changing the mindset of our teachers and parents, and the state did not give us much direction with this. I'm sure the others are</p>	<p>Offers students options and lays out expectations for learning</p>

Vermont Principals' Association
 Proficiency-Based Learning Testimony to House Education February 6, 2019

<p>giving you more detail, but as a brand-new principal and when I asked someone their answer more or less was figure it out on your own. Again, at the beginning we did not have a curriculum director in our district helping us with this. We had one for two years and he did most of it. However, at the beginning (and currently) there was/is not a lot of public roll out from the state, so the schools are left to do it. Could have been rolled out a lot better in my opinion.</p>	
<p>Our elementary staff have not had sufficient PD and our curriculum work needs to be complete.</p>	<p>A success is our What I Need intervention block. Three times a week for 30 minutes every student in the school receives small group instruction that is targeted at their specific needs. Depending on the child's needs, this work could be remedial or enrichment. We have balanced this more skills-based work with a growing focus on project-based learning.</p>
<p>Communication + typical challenges w/ change. People expecting it to be perfect when what we currently do isn't perfect anyway.</p>	<p>More success with transferable skills than proficiencies at elementary level</p>
<p>The transition for some educators is difficult and at times inconsistent. It's crucial to provide good, ongoing professional development to support teachers. Another challenge is helping the community (parents, students, school board) understand the benefits of a PBL system.</p>	<p>We are having great conversations and moving at what feels like an appropriate pace.</p>
<p>I would say the biggest challenge regarding proficiency-based learning is the lack of clear direction from the state, followed by attempting to get all schools in our SU to adopt the same proficiencies. The state provided sample proficiencies, then told each district to develop their own. This will create uneven standards across the state. Eventually the state will feel the need to impose standardization as a way to measure school quality school to school.</p>	<p>Teachers and students have made the transition to PBL</p>
<p>Convincing parents on the value of proficiencies and grading. Difficulty with transcript and Powerschool.</p>	<p>We've had success in helping people with this understanding through ongoing, regular, flexible, and creative communication. But, we have a long way to go</p>

Vermont Principals' Association
 Proficiency-Based Learning Testimony to House Education February 6, 2019

<p>Report card mechanism, helping parents come along, getting teachers to a place where they allow this to be transformative versus overlaying it on their existing structures and preferences.</p>	<p>More accepted at the K-5 level.</p>
<p>We are having difficulty with common understanding and expectations – we need more/on going time as a staff to discuss what would proficiency look like in a variety of situations – does one example make a student proficient – if not how many is expected – and is it true for each standard or are there expectations. How do we best track proficiencies that are interdisciplinary-? Is there an easy way? How does technology help us and how does it limit us. – training of new software – adapting it to fit our needs etc ... Is there state consistency with what is proficient and what is not - ?</p>	
<p>One of the largest challenges for this work is finding best practices at the elementary school level. Within this we are struggling with how to balance skills acquisition with providing kids with a rich "21st Century" learning environment. We visited two model schools in NH last year, but they had what we saw as too much of a focus on skills acquisition at the expense of developing high order thinking skills.</p>	
<p>Trying to combine essential proficiencies from two former SU's into one set. Then line up curriculum with new core set. Trying to implement a new proficiency-based grading and reporting tool (JumpRope). It's clunky and time consuming for teachers. They haven't yet had enough PD, though this year is just a pilot year.</p>	
<p>Communication is a constant challenge for PBL. Making sure that staff, students, and parents understand the shift is difficult. We do not use Carnegie Units in any way for our PBL system and that makes communicating when students have met our PBGRs more complicated. I would also say that helping teachers make the transition to a PBL grading system has also been a challenge.</p>	
<p>One of the biggest challenges is helping people (students, staff, parents, etc) with understanding the what, why, how.</p>	
<p>Difficult for parents to wrap their heads around.</p> <p>They worry about how this system will be viewed by prospective colleges.</p> <p>Valedictorian and salutatorian concerns</p>	