

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: Proficiency-Based Learning

Assessment

- **Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems (LCAS) Convenings:** Assessment systems are essential for ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all students. They have the potential for ensuring that each and every learner meets high expectations that are set across all content areas. Since LCAS is one of four levers identified by the Vermont Agency of Education for supporting the success of all students, convenings with educational leaders were held to refine tools and investigate resources that can be used to improve local systems that support personalized, proficiency-based learning. This is a four-part professional learning opportunity for educators. Sessions offered in November 2019, January, February and a spring date in 2020. Additional sessions will be provided at the BEST Institute in June. Information about the sessions and related resources will also be communicated through a series of blogs.
- **14th Annual Transition and Career Conference - Performance Assessment Workshop.** Participants had the opportunity to develop a shared understanding of LCAS and explore materials available on our website.
- **Vermont Physical Education Assessment (VTPEA) Training of Trainers (2017-2019):** These trainings for VTPEA Teacher Leaders show educators how to extend the VTPEA to all students, including those with disabilities. Teacher Leaders are also shown how the VTPEA is part of the Physical Education curriculum and provided with materials that are aligned with state adopted physical education standards.
- **Elementary School and Middle School Science Working Groups (2019):** A working group of elementary and middle school educators came together to create 3-4 complete proficiency scales that can be used in the classroom to assess students. These will be used as models for the state. A full proficiency scale bank is in progress.
- **Building Proficiency Scales with Science Educators (2018-2019):** Educators worked together with AOE staff to learn how to unpack and read the standards of the NGSS, and begin implementing them vertically, and district wide.
- **Vermont Arts Learning Target Bank Work Sessions for Art or Music:** In this work session visual art or music teachers learned a process for unpacking the National Core Arts Standards into learning targets and received an introduction to the Vermont Arts Learning Target Bank, which contains learning targets that can be used for both instruction and assessment.

- **Building Next Generation Science Assessment Series:** Educators met with AOE staff to clarify the need for developing curriculum-embedded performance assessments in proficiency-based systems, develop a shared understanding of essential components of curriculum-embedded performance assessments, examine NGSS bundles to determine how they can guide the development of instructional sequences, and develop/identify and evaluate potential anchoring phenomena.
- **Science Performance Assessment Series:** This series of workshops provided educators with an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the Next Generation Science Standards by constructing an aligned performance assessment. Participants were expected to pilot the assessments and then refine them based on student work.
- **Developing a Systemic PK-12 Proficiency-Based Learning Health and Physical Education Curriculum and Assessment Systems:** Several conference sessions have been presented for SHAPE Vermont, a professional organization that serves Vermont health and physical education teachers.

Instructional Practices (PBL)

- **Instructional Coaching Network Improvement Community (IC NIC) (2019-2021).** This is a four-session professional learning opportunity for instructional coaches. Instructional coaches work with teachers to use improvement science to improve teaching and positively impact student learning. Sessions are offered as a series in September and November 2019, and February and April 2020. Educators use improvement science to local test change ideas designed to improve student learning.
- **Just Playing Around: Elementary Engineering.** The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) specifically call for students to engage in the practices of science and engineering that will address major challenges confronting our society today and get them ready to solve societal and environmental challenges they'll face in the future.
Workshop participants explored the value of engineering in early elementary classrooms, as well as resources and tools to help build students' capacity in both science and engineering.
- **Fairy Tale Stem: A PreK-2 STEM and Engineering Workshop.** This workshop is geared towards engaging early education and lower primary educators into engineering design challenges, the importance of engineering in early elementary classrooms, pulling apart the NGSS engineering standards, considering ways to incorporate engineering into lessons, and learning about tools and resources that will help build students' capacity in both science and engineering.
- **Proficiency-Based Learning Edcamp Series:** The VT PBL Edcamp series provided participants with an opportunity to share and learn about proficiency-

based learning in a format that is driven by the participants. An overarching theme guides the day, but participants build the sessions under that theme. Questions are asked and answered, resources shared, and networks of educators get built through these events.

- **Arts Learning Target Work Session.** In this work session, visual art, music, and physical education teachers received an overview of the ways in which our state education initiatives overlap with content standards and the major shifts necessary when using them. Educators unpacked the standards to create a deeper understanding.
- **STEM Resource Sharing Day:** Participants at this STEM sharing event had the opportunity to learn about best practices in STEM education including the use of interdisciplinary performance assessments. Additionally, participants will learn from and network with other educators. Lastly, the group will spend some time designing future work and outcomes of a statewide STEM network.
- **Unpacking New Media Arts Standards:** In this work session music teachers received a brief overview of the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS). Topics addressed included standards and proficiency-based learning, the use of learning targets, alignment of units with NCAS, and practical ways to implement these aspects in the art room.
- **Unpacking Next Generation Science Standards Series:** These workshops were designed in sequential order to support the field with implementing the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) within a proficiency-based system. Participants worked on understanding Act 77, EQS and proficiency-based learning before examining how the NGSS can support a proficiency-based system. Participants also began writing task-neutral proficiency scales and learned the difference between a performance expectation and a performance task.
- **Essential Math for College and Careers (EMC²):** This innovative high school math course is being collaboratively designed by Vermont GEAR UP with AOE staff, school teachers, and postsecondary faculty. EMC² will provide high school juniors or seniors who are below proficiency in math with an opportunity to improve their skills and alleviate the need for remediation in college.
- **English Language Arts and the Brain Workshop:** In this workshop offered regionally, participants learned about how using strategies from brain research can connect to best practices for teaching. While the workshop was focused on proficiencies for English language arts, many of the strategies could be applied to other areas.

Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirement (PGBRs) Development and Implementation:

- **College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State Standards Proficiency Work Sessions:** Elementary, middle and high school teachers created sample K-12 performance indicators and Proficiency Based Graduation

Requirements for the SBE adopted College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards.

- **American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (ACTFL) (2019-2020):** K-12 world language teachers developed sample PBGRs and indicators based off of the SBE-adopted national ACTFL standards in December 2019. A WFM request for vetting this document by the field is currently in the process of editing and accessibility checks. The target date for sharing on the AOE web site is mid-March 2020, with announcements to the field at the annual VFLA conference (mid-March) and in the WFM.
- **Jump\$tart National Standards in K-12 Personal Financial Education (2019-2020):** The AOE is currently in a 2-year partnership with the Center for Financial Literacy (CFL) to support sixteen K-12 educators in the development of sample PBGRs and indicators based off of the recently adopted Jump\$tart standards. This sample work will be submitted to the AOE no later than March 15th, 2020 for vetting by the field. Statewide K-12 roll out of the work will take place in both northern and southern venues over multiple dates in October 2020. Sample PBGRs will be available on the AOE web site post vetting. The CFL is currently in the process of mailing hard copy ‘Save the Dates’ to principals and superintendents in order to hold the October dates for professional learning. The October trainings will also be shared with listservs and in the WFM.
- **National Council for the Arts (NCAS) (December 2016-2018):** In December of 2016, the AOE facilitated the work of arts content specialists to revise the sample PBGR documents for the Arts reflected by the recent adoption of the National Core Art Standards (NCAS). All sample documents were published on the AOE website after vetting from the field. Music and Theater became available on the AOE website in the Fall of 2017, and Media Arts, Visual Arts and Dance were posted in the Spring of 2018.

Proficiency-Based Grading and Reporting

- **2019-20 Health Education Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Designing Performance-based Assessments in Health Education:** This is a three-session professional learning opportunity for educators to develop, test and evaluate a performance-based summative assessment. Sessions offered in October 2019, January and May 2020.
- **2019-20 Physical Education PLC - Designing Performance-based Assessments in Physical Education:** This is a three-session professional learning opportunity for educators to develop, test and evaluate a performance-based summative assessment. Sessions offered in October 2019, January and April 2020.
- **2017 Proficiency-Based Grading Practices Sessions:** These sessions were held to review and provide feedback on the [Research Brief: Proficiency-Based Grading Practices](#).

- **[The Vermont Transferable Skills Assessment Supports \(VTSAS\):](#)** These supports were developed as a part of a collaboration between the AOE, Great Schools Partnership, and dozens of Vermont educators, administrators, and curriculum leaders. VTSAS resources cut across academic content areas and support assessment of the transferable skills articulated in Vermont's Education Quality Standards (EQS).

Structural Support

The League of Innovative Schools (LIS)

- **Personalized Learning and Flexible Pathways Showcase:** The LIS and the AOE hosted a Personalized Learning and Flexible Pathways Showcase. During the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years, thirteen Vermont schools engaged in powerful work funded by the Agency of Education's Flexible Pathways grants around Developing and Scaling Career Advisory; Integrating Expanded Learning Opportunities into Personalized Learning Plans; and Developing Work-Based Learning at the Secondary Level. Many of these schools went to Lake Morey to share their work, resources, and progress in these areas. Unlike past years, this event was open to non-LIS members in an effort to share information with as many people as possible, to generate deep discussion and new thinking, and to grow networks and learning communities.
- **Proficiency-Based Learning: A Systemic Approach Seminar Series:** This seminar series facilitated by staff from Great Schools Partnership focused on supporting school districts and unions in Vermont to implement proficiency-based learning, the webinar archive, and essential guiding documents and resources to support this work are available [online](#).

The Vermont Professional Learning Network:

- **[Self-Paced Courses:](#)** This series of self-paced courses on Proficiency-Based Learning focus on elemental issues related to proficiency-based instructional practices.
- **[Vermont Stories:](#)** These videos provide stories from schools and districts as they implement Education Quality Standards across Vermont. Discussion Guides are provided as companion documents for all of Vermont Stories.
- **[So You Have a Plan, Now What? Using Rapid Learning Cycles to Move Initiatives Forward:](#)** This session facilitated by Dr. Elizabeth A. City, Director of the Doctor of Education Leadership Program at Harvard Graduate School emphasized Rapid Learning Cycles (3-4-week cycles of action research to test out ideas, discuss, modify and then re-implement). In addition, After Action Reviews that allow teams to re-pause and use analysis tools to maintain focus and momentum were explored through team plans that were brought to the session.
- **[The Curriculum Director PLC Series:](#)** This series provided curriculum leaders with the opportunity to meet regularly as a community of learners to explore

content relevant to the group and to examine professional dilemmas through facilitated dialogue. Session topics were designed to be broad enough to allow participants to shape the direction of the PLC throughout the year and to bring relevant information to the table.

- [The Digging Deep Expert Series](#) is designed to provide Vermont educators with the opportunity to learn from and engage with experts who have established credibility in creating instructional practices, flexible pathways, local comprehensive assessments, and proficiency-based learning (PBL) systems.