

AOE Testimony: VTVLC/HSCP Budget Update

Testimony To: House Committee on Education

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Emergency Response

- On March 16, 2020 Student Pathways division was tasked with transition to Remote Learning (inclusive of Maintenance of Learning and Continuity of Learning)
- This required an approach that was inclusive of our PK-12 system, CTE and AEL
- This also required the ability to transition rapidly, without additional funding, and with a two-fold approach – address immediate term needs and build a foundation for future state (reopening and beyond)
- Created five cross-discipline “sprint” teams to act as the organizational structure to rapidly produce technical assistance, engage in outreach and research, and develop a virtual infrastructure to support their work (PK-5/Analog; 6-12/Virtual; Re-opening/Re-entry; Assessment; Continuity of Programs/Infrastructure)
- March/April we needed to produce the following:
 - Fully transition all staff offsite (Completed 3/18/2020)
 - Maintenance of Learning Guidance (Published 3/25/20)
 - Create CoL plans and resources to meet Governor’s order (Published 4/1/2020)
 - Create an analog (or non-digital) and digital ecosystem to support Continuity of Learning
 - Expanded VTVLC (Announced 4/5/2020)
 - Launched PBS partnership (4/6/2020)
 - Established VPR partnership (4/17/20 and launched 5/8/2020)
 - Maintain current federal and state programs (ongoing), including rapid adjustments to federal guidance, etc.
 - Plan for reopening (ongoing – inclusive of Strong Healthy Schools Survey; 90+ support and technical assistance documents)

Strategic Planning

Budgeting for emergency response

- For Spring 2020 and almost assuredly into the following year a State-supported virtual ecosystem to support districts in the delivery of virtual/online learning would be required

- Spending projections were completed to establish likely carryforward for HSCP; allowed for reallocating HSCP funds pre-emptively to VTVLC appropriation for remainder of FY20
- Through a combination of HSCP and Perkins carryforward funds provided grant to VTVLC for FY21 to support:
 - K-12, CTE and AEL
 - 19 virtual academies
 - 5400 unique students (nearly 500% growth)
 - 32,000 enrollments (1300% growth)
 - Close to 900 educators (16 times the number from pre-COVID)
 - 100 additional Online Teaching Specialists (OTS) trained (for a 300% growth of OTS teachers in state)

Budgeting for the Future:

We live in a state with one of the most comprehensive student-centered learning regulatory frameworks in the country. With an education system committed to personalized, proficiency-based learning and flexible pathways to graduation, we were well-situated to respond to the pandemic. What may have contributed to challenges?

Points to consider:

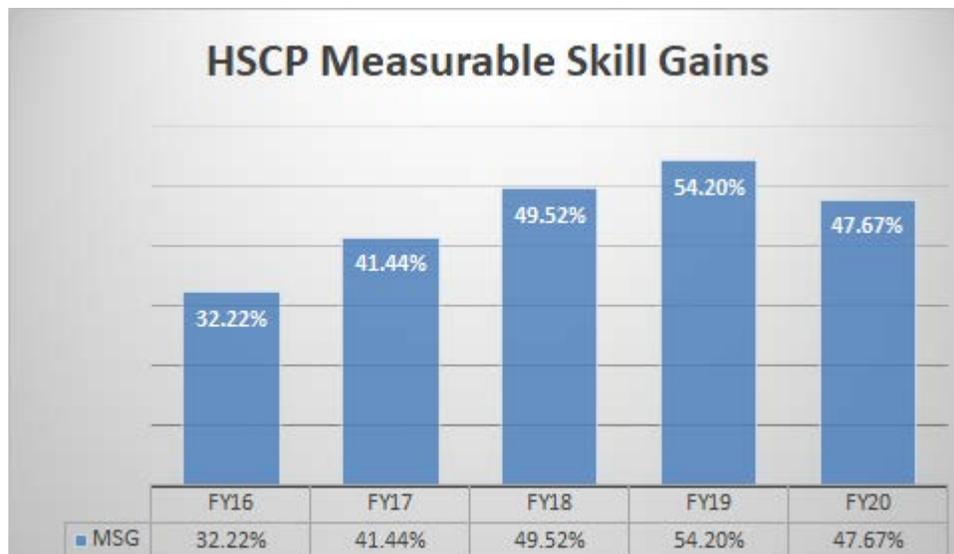
- For last several years we have seen level or increased appropriations for Dual Enrollment, Early College and the High School Completion Program to the tune (approximately) of \$1.8M, \$2.5M, and \$4M respectively ([FY21 AOE Budget Book](#))
- Over those last several years we've seen level funding of Secondary School Reform and VTVLC at (approximately) \$200,000 and \$100,000 respectively – both appropriations identified to directly support implementation of personalization and proficiency-based learning in 52 SU/SDs
- Over the last five years there has been steady funding for the AEL system, but a 32% decline in student participation, and a steady 13% average graduation rate (FY20 COVID outcomes excepted)
- With the passage of Act 77, the adoption of the Education Quality Standards, and the passage of recent legislation such as Act 173, Act 189 and Act 1 (to name a few) we have a clear implementation mandate for the future

Future State

One(s) to Grow On:

1. Leverage the growth seen during COVID:
 - a. Capitalize on the significant growth of online teacher specialists
 - b. Understand that a reduction in fully remote students will not necessarily mean a decline in online enrollments

- c. Utilize the expanded structure to support SU/SDs in meeting teacher/substitute shortage issues
 - d. Leverage VTVLC as a bridge (back or between) for Home Study students and schools/districts
 - e. Prepare students for the real world
 - f. Continue to support and expand on the number of schools/educators using VTVLC's To-Go in blended learning environments
 - g. Use Canvas platform to develop age-appropriate curriculum for learners in need of basic skills instruction (e.g., students with disabilities, AEL system, etc.)
 - h. Use Canvas platform to support coherence and implementation of Act 173 levers (e.g., sample coordinated curriculum, literacy instruction, etc.)
2. Leverage VTVLC investment to support coherence and connection between our systems – K-12, CTE, AEL and Home Study:
- a. Standards-based instruction and assessment that supports proficiency attainment across all learning environments
 - b. Developing regional PBGRs, learning expectations and assessments between schools, CTE and AEL
 - c. Leverage online learning to address long-standing geographic, transportation and scheduling barriers to flexible pathways and between learning environments
3. Don't lower expectations in order to address real or perceived funding needs:
- a. From FY18 to FY20 AEL system saw a 22% increase in adult learners earning an Industry Recognized Credential (IRC) who had that as a goal
 - b. Despite the COVID disruption to all education systems AEL has maintained steady high school graduation rates, steady secondary credential rates, and improved measurable skill gains over the last five years (see below).



4. Change is disruptive but doesn't have to be destructive. It does require asking hard questions, letting go of what we used to do or temporary solutions disguised as long-term innovations, and investing for future state and sustainability.