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## **MEMO:**

**TO: WWSU Administrators**  
**FROM: Brigid**  
**DATE: Sept. 2014**  
**RE: Start Up Information 2014-15**

Well, so far so good! All seven buildings made it through start-up without any real issues, and we continue to run smoothly. My rather lengthy back-to-school letter that went to all employees was sent to board members as well. Congratulations to all of you for a job well done. Let's look forward to a great year, with great rewards throughout it, resulting from our continued hard work, dedication and passion for all that is schooling.

*"A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be." Rosalynn Carter.*

### **Meeting Schedule:**

Admin. Team Mtgs. usually are 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of the month from 9:30-11:45 at central office. September dates are 9/15 and 9/29. Workgroups meet on the same days as the business meetings from 8:30-9:30. Leadership team meetings simply start at 8:30.

In addition to our Admin meetings, I schedule regular **1-1 meeting time** with you. This allows me to block out time for each of you, gives me planned access to you in order to stay informed and address problems that are not time sensitive, to build our working relationships, and to fulfill my responsibilities around supervision and evaluation. In a district the size of ours, unfortunately, I do not have a lot of flexibility. Thank you in advance for making these times work. Meetings with building principals are at your schools, unless we decide to move it to my office. The schedule is as follows:

Amy & Lisa/Harwood:	1st and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month from 11:30-1:00. C.O. Admin joins on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed.
Jean/Fayston:	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 5:00-6:30 (before brd. mtg.)
Kaiya/Waitsfield:	4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month from 10:30-12:00.

Jill/Warren:	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month from 5:30-7:00 (before brd. mtg.)
Duane/Moretown:	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 10:30-12:00.
Tom/Wat.-Dux:	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month from 3:00-4:30.
Sheila/WWSU:	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month from 10:30-12:00.
Michelle/WWSU:	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month from 2:00-3:30.
Donarae/WWSU:	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 12:30-2:00.

**Work Groups:**

I have been thinking about the workgroup model. I plan to review the Google docs as to the current state, so that I can determine if tweaks are needed, but I just haven't gotten there yet. I do believe the structure continues to make sense, so we will keep it in place. Last year, we did not move as many elements into workgroups as we had the year before that, because again we worked as a whole group much of the time. We will continue to come together as a full group for items such as the WWSU Action Plan, MTSS, etc. Policy packet #5 admin review will be one of the first workgroup tasks beginning in October. Here are the assignments for the year.

**WORKGROUP A:**

Tom Drake, Chair  
 Amy Rex  
 Stephanie Hudak  
 Jean Berthiaume  
 Duane Pierson

**WORKGROUP B:**

Kaiya Korb, Chair  
 Lisa Atwood  
 Denise Goodnow  
 Kathy Pogharian  
 Jill Ballou

**NUTS, BOLTS, & REVIEW:**

A number of important items for your edification will appear in my start-up board report, so please read it thoroughly. Also, remember that the board reports and resource attachments live on our website, should you need to refer back to that information throughout the year.

Here are a few administrator only items:

1. Michelle and I were able to settle **the support staff contract** for 2 years with only one mediation session. The terms are still confidential until the association ratifies. This year we will bargain 3 contracts; HEA, WWEA and a first time new WWSU (required by law as a result of ACT 153 - bringing over special education staff). **Please read** your teachers' contract and be well prepared at our admin team business meeting on Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>. We will break out into small groups to discuss your governing contract and then come back together to develop a strategy and priority list of elements we hope to change.
2. This year we will provide **required trainings** at central office for all administrative assistants. The dates are: 12/10, 2/11, 4/8, and 5/3. The C.O. admin team is working on the topic areas and determining the trainers. I will be present for all the trainings so no one gets hurt, especially the trainers. We need your input at the Oct. 20<sup>th</sup> admin business meeting. Come prepared with ideas or reflections on your challenges.
3. On another note, please train and remind your own admin assistants to not engage in conversations about or give direction concerning **employee's use of leave benefits**, especially sick time, worker's comp, application for disability, FMLA, etc. His/her only response should be

to contact Pearl Vargas or Susan Neill at central office to get those questions answered. This still remains a problem, as some have “always done it this way.”

4. We implemented the new **WWSU enrollment form** this year. Please let me know if you determine any difficulties with it. Be sure it was fully implemented as well.
5. Some board members have suggested holding a few **SBAC parent nights**, similar to the one Sheila provided at Harwood. Give this some thought and be prepared to discuss the pros and cons on Oct. 20<sup>th</sup> at our admin meeting.
6. I want to once again highlight for you the **importance of common local assessment data**. It is essential that each of you monitor staff in your buildings so that all the agreed upon common assessments are administered and recorded in VCAT. We still do not have any information from the AOE as to how AYP and NCLB regulations will be calculated or reported under the new SBAC system. We continue to be told that we will not be allowed a baseline/skip year for AYP from the feds. Local common assessments can truly help us support our schools and navigate the unknown in the SBAC landscape. **Please read the attached “VT SBE Statement and Resolution on Assessment and Accountability 8/19/14 (A-1)**. Also attached, and something you all should become more familiar with, is the **Vermont School Improvement Progression Chart for 2014-15 (A-2)**.
7. I have scheduled a **legal training with Pietro Lynn** for our admin meeting on 11/17/14 focused on employee investigations and job actions. The training will begin at 8:30, and, therefore, we will not have a workgroup session.
8. We will use some time at our meeting on 9/15 to round robin about opening school successes, shares, and challenges. In addition, we will do the same regarding busing routes, Danny as our new manager, new forms, etc. It is essential that the bus barn can get someone on a **direct phone line between 3:15-4:00. By Friday, 9/12/14 each of you needs to specify in an email to Danny, Michelle and I, who that person is and what phone number should be utilized**. This is necessary as part of our overall safety plan. First Student, for the last several years, has donated the transportation for Project Graduation; I just wanted you to know that.
9. Please remember that I want you to partner with Sheila as you navigate the process and write the documents involving any staff member on an **Intensive Improvement Plan** as part of his/her evaluation process.
10. **All hiring of Special Educators** needs to involve Donarae from the onset, review of materials, selection process for interviews, first round interviews, etc.
11. It is not permissible to **interview** any employment candidate who is under a contract or a letter of intent with another SU or SD in Vermont, regardless of the time of year. If you call a continuing employee to set up an interview, he/she needs to tell you the date by which his/her letter of intent or contract letter is/was due back, whether or not they have a written approved extension and for how long, or if they can provide a letter from their superintendent giving them permission to interview. Use email and get these answers in writing.
12. Contract for paraeducators cannot be written until and when they are documented **HQP**. If you want to hire someone who still needs to take the online assessment prior to the start of school, they are a sub paid at a sub rate until they are HQP.
13. I am attaching a copy of **the VT SBE Education Quality Standards, annotated version with guidance from the AOE (A-3)**. Please read it through again in advance of the 9/29 admin meeting. We will conduct a walkthrough for the purpose of gap analysis and action planning.
14. Attached is a memorandum from the **Secretary of Education on broadband access to address the “digital divide” (A-4)**. This is for your information and possible action; I just want to be sure you know the resource is available.
15. I know you are all continuing your hard work moving forward with our model for MTSS. Our neighbors in Washington Central shared this attached piece on **Simplifying Response to Intervention (A-5)**. I am passing it along so that you can see how others are approaching implementation and for possible use with your staff.

16. Late last spring and through the summer, I worked with Denise, Stephanie, and Tom regarding the **Management of Life-Threatening Food Allergies**. Our work got quite in-depth, considering not only student safety but school liability. The conclusions and research supported an approach focused on maintaining a nut/allergy aware school, not nut free, for example. I think it would be great for us to share the learning with admin team and to try to have consistent procedures in all our schools in the WWSU. I am attaching the admin procedures we developed and the board adopted for your review and consideration (A-6). Also attached is **the VT State Board Policies on Epinephrine Auto-Injectors as Required in Act 68 of 2013 (A-7)**. **These topics are on the admin team agenda for 9-15-14.**
17. As we begin budget season, you will recall that my role is largely behind the scenes, reviewing the drafts, and supporting you and your choices for your buildings at board meetings. Michelle keeps me very up to date at our 1-1's. **However, whenever you plan to add or delete positions, add or change programming, or initiate any sizable change, I expect you to bring this up with me 1-1 either at our meeting or by phone and email.** I still have a responsibility K-12 to coordinate the operations of all of our schools and to ensure equal opportunity for our students, even though my principals operate quite autonomously. It is also essential that I am thinking about how your decision might impact another school in our SU.
18. **Climate Surveys** will be administered this Spring FY 15. Are we ready to go Kaiya's workgroup? Edits completed.
19. Please remember our coordinated decision. **All staff meetings are held on Tuesdays.**
20. Remember we agreed to **have all school newsletters** shared with all SU administrators.
21. On 5-19-14 Jean agreed to send all of you the student survey regarding their instructional experience. **We agreed to fully implement the WWSU Student/Instructor Information Survey Tool this year. We will determine the dates for implementation at the 10/20 admin. team meeting.**

I hope you find this memo useful. Please be sure to read the Start-Up Board report, which should be out later this week, as well. I would like us to remember as we head through the FY 2015 school year, that we will always be stronger and accomplish more as a whole than we ever could alone.

**Vermont State Board of Education**  
**Statement and Resolution on Assessment and Accountability**  
Adopted August 19, 2014

The Vermont State Board of Education is committed to ensuring that all students develop the knowledge, capabilities and dispositions they need to thrive as citizens in their communities, higher education and their careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Board of Education's Education Quality Standards (EQS) rules aim to ensure that all students in Vermont public schools are afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality, and enable them to achieve or exceed the standards approved by the State Board of Education.

These rules were designed to ensure continuous improvement in student performance, instruction and leadership, so that all students are able to develop high levels of skill and capability across seven essential domains: literacy, mathematics, scientific inquiry and knowledge, global citizenship, physical and health education and wellness, artistic expression, and transferable 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

To achieve these goals, educators need to make use of diverse indicators of student learning and strengths, in order to comprehensively assess student progress and adjust their practice to continuously improve learning. They also need to document the opportunities schools provide to further the goals of equity and growth.

Uniform standardized tests, administered across all schools, are a critical tool for schools' improvement efforts. Without some stable and valid external measure, we cannot evaluate how effective we are in our efforts to improve schools and learning. Standardized tests – along with teacher-developed assessments and student work samples – can give educators and citizens insight into the skills, knowledge and capabilities our students have developed.

What standardized tests can do that teacher developed tests cannot do is give us reliable, comparative data. We can use test scores to tell whether we are doing better over time. Of particular note, standardized tests help monitor how well we serve students with different life circumstances and challenges. When used appropriately, standardized tests are a sound and objective way to evaluate student progress.

Despite their value, there are many things tests cannot tell us. Standardized tests like the NECAP and soon, the SBAC, can tell us something about how students are doing in a limited set of narrowly defined subjects overall, as measured at a given time. However, they cannot tell us how to help students do even better. Nor can they adequately capture the strengths of all children, nor the growth that can be ascribed to individual teachers. And under high-stakes conditions, when schools feel extraordinary pressure to raise scores, even rising scores may not be a signal that students are actually learning more. At best, a standardized test is an incomplete picture of learning: without additional measures, a single test is inadequate to capture a years' worth of learning and growth.

Along a related dimension, the American Psychological Association wrote:

“(N)o test is valid for all purposes. Indeed, tests vary in their intended uses and in their ability to provide meaningful assessments of student learning. Therefore, while the goal of using large-scale testing to measure and improve student and school system performance is laudable, it is also critical that such tests are sound, are scored properly, and are used appropriately.”

Unfortunately, the way in which standardized tests have been used under federal law as almost the single measure of school quality has resulted in the frequent misuse of these instruments across the nation.

Because of the risk of inappropriate uses of testing, the Vermont State Board of Education herewith adopts a series of guiding principles for the appropriate use of standardized tests to support continuous improvements of learning.

1. The Proper Role of Standardized Testing – The purpose of any large scale assessment must be clearly stated and the assessments must be demonstrated as scientifically and empirically valid for that purpose(s) prior to their use. This includes research and verification as to whether a student’s performance on tests is actually predictive of performance on other indicators we care about, including post-secondary success, graduation rates and future employment.

In addition, standardized test results should be used only in concert with a diverse set of measures that capture evidence of student growth and school impact across all important outcomes outlined in the Education Quality Standards.

2. Public Reporting Requirement - It is a state and local obligation to report on the quality of the schools to the citizenry. Standardized testing is part of this reporting obligation. The state board encourages local public reporting of a diverse and comprehensive set of school quality indicators in local school, faculty and community communications.
3. Judicious and Proportionate Testing - The State Board of Education advocates for reducing the amount of time spent on summative, standardized testing and encourages the federal government to reduce the current requirements for annual testing in multiple subjects in every grade, 3-8, and then again in high school. Excessive testing diverts resources and time away from learning while providing little additional value for accountability purposes.
4. Test Development Criteria - Any broad scale standardized assessment used in the state of Vermont must be developed and used appropriately in accord with the

principles adopted by the American Educational Research Association, the National Council on Measurement in Education, and the American Psychological Association.

5. Value-added scores – Although the federal government is encouraging states to use value added scores for teacher, principal and school evaluations, this policy direction is not appropriate. A strong body of recent research has found that there is no valid method of calculating “value-added” scores which compare pass rates from one year to the next, nor do current value-added models adequately account for factors outside the school that influence student performance scores. Thus, other than for research or experimental purposes, this technique will not be employed in Vermont schools for any consequential purpose.
6. Mastery level or Cut-Off scores – While the federal government continues to require the use of subjectively determined, cut-off scores; employing such metrics lacks scientific foundation. The skills needed for success in society are rich and diverse. Consequently, there is no single point on a testing scale that has proven accurate in measuring the success of a school or in measuring the talents of an individual. Claims to the contrary are technically indefensible and their application would be unethical.

The use of cut-off scores reports findings only at one point on a statistical distribution. Scale scores provide significantly more information. They allow a more valid disaggregation of scores by sub-group, provide better measures of progress and provide a more comprehensive view of achievement gaps.

7. Use of cut scores and proficiency categories for reporting purposes - Under NCLB states are required to report school level test results in terms of the Percentage of Proficient Students. The federally mandated reporting method has several well-documented negative effects that compromise our ability to meaningfully examine schools’ improvement efforts:
  - Interpretations based on “percent proficient” hides the full range of scores and how they have changed. Thus, underlying trends in performance are often hidden.
  - The targets established for proficiency are subjectively determined and are not based on research. Interpretations based on “percent proficient” also lack predictive validity.
  - Modest changes to these subjective cut scores can dramatically affect the percent of students who meet the target. Whether a cut score is set high or

low arbitrarily changes the size of the achievement gap independent of the students' learning. Thus, the results can be misleading.

So that we can more validly and meaningfully describe school- and state-level progress, the State Board of Education endorses reporting performance in terms of scale scores and standard deviations rather than percent proficient. We will comply with federal requirements, but will emphasize defensible and useful reporting metrics.

8. The Federal, State and Local Obligation for Assuring Adequacy and Equality of Opportunity – Much as the state must insure a high quality education for all children, the school must be provided with adequate and equitable resources from the federal, state and local governments and must use these resources wisely and judiciously. Thus, any report on a school based on the state's EQS standards must also include a report on the adequacy of resources provided by or to that school in light of the school's unique needs. Such evaluations shall address the adequacy of resources, the judicious use of resources and identify any deficiencies.

### **Resolution on Assessment and Accountability Vermont State Board of Education**

WHEREAS, our nation and Vermont's future well-being relies on a high-quality public education system that prepares all students for college, careers, citizenship and lifelong learning, and strengthens the nation's and the state's social and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, our nation's school systems have been spending growing amounts of time, money and energy on high-stakes standardized testing, in which student performance on standardized tests is used to make major decisions affecting individual students, educators and schools; and

WHEREAS, the overreliance on high-stakes standardized testing in state and federal accountability systems is undermining educational quality and equity in the nation's public schools by hampering educators' efforts to focus on the broad range of learning experiences that promote the innovation, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, communication, critical thinking and deep subject-matter knowledge that will allow students to thrive in a democracy and an increasingly global society and economy; and

WHEREAS, it is widely recognized that standardized testing is an inadequate and often unreliable measure of both student learning and educator effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, a compelling body of national research shows the over-emphasis on standardized testing has caused considerable collateral damage in areas such as narrowing the curriculum, teaching to the test, reducing love of learning, pushing students out of school, and undermining school climate; and

WHEREAS, high-stakes standardized testing has negative effects for students from all backgrounds, and especially for low-income students, English language learners, children of color, and those with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the culture and structure of the systems in which students learn must change in order to foster engaging school experiences that promote joy in learning, depth of thought and breadth of knowledge for students; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Vermont State Board of Education requests that the Secretary of Education reexamine public school accountability systems in this state, and develop a system based on multiple forms of assessment which has at its center qualitative assessments, does not require extensive standardized testing, more accurately reflects the broad range of student learning, decreases the role of compliance monitoring, and is used to support students and improve schools; and

RESOLVED, that the Vermont State Board of Education calls on the United States Congress and Administration to accordingly amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (currently known as the "No Child Left Behind Act") to reduce the testing mandates, promote multiple forms of evidence of student learning and school quality, eschew the use of student test scores in evaluating educators, and allow flexibility that reflects the unique circumstances of all states; and

RESOLVED that the Vermont State Board of Education calls on other state and national organizations to act in concert with these goals to improve and broaden educational goals, provide adequate resources, and ensure a high quality education for all children of the state and the nation.

### Vermont School Improvement Progression 2014-2015 Goal: Continuous Improvement Based on Research-Based Practices

#### Year 1 School Improvement

- Establish SU-level and school-level School Improvement Teams
- Provide written notice to parents that school has not met AYP
- If Title I school, offer school choice
- Assess current status using Green Mountain Star and develop Continuous Improvement Plan Complete and submit Assurance Form by 9/16/14
- Continuous Improvement Plan to SU by 11/6/14
- Peer-reviewed School Improvement Plan to AOE by 12/31/14
- Implement and monitor plan

No Formal Status

did not make AYP for the first time

- Fayston
- Moretown
- Waitsfield

#### Year 2 School Improvement

- Continue SU-level and school-level School Improvement Teams
- Provide written notice to parents that school has not met AYP
- If Title I school, offer school choice
- Complete and submit Assurance Form by 9/16/14
- Offer Supplemental Educational Services if Title I School
- Review, revise, and implement School Improvement Plan

#### Year 1 Corrective Action

- Continue SU-level and school-level improvement teams
- Provide written notice to parents that school has not met AYP
- If Title I, offer Supplemental Educational Services
- If Title I school, offer school choice
- Review/implement School Improvement Plan
- SU/ School Improvement Team must select and implement one of six "corrective actions", completed form due 9/16/14

Harwood

#### Year 2 Corrective Action (Yr 1 Restructuring)

- Continue SU-level and school-level School Improvement Teams
- Provide written notice to parents that school has not met AYP
- If Title I offer Supplemental Educational Services and School Choice
- School Improvement Team continues "corrective action" choice
- Complete and submit Assurance Form by 9/16/14
- Systemic assessment of school and district using Green Mountain Star
- Submit Intent to Restructure School Governance Form 5/31/15
- Continuous Improvement Plan with Restructuring Plan due 5/31/15

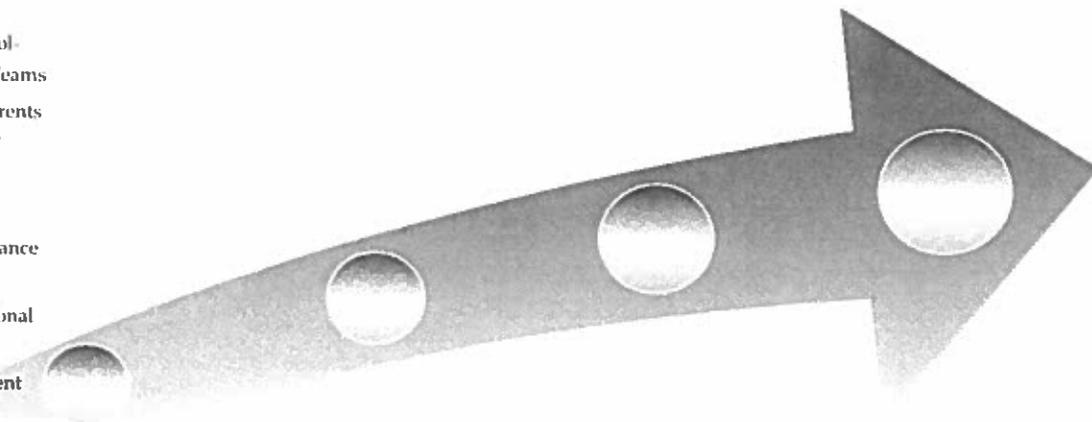
#### Year 3, 4, 6 and Above Corrective Action

- Continue SU-level and school-level Improvement Teams
- Provide written notice to parents that school has not met AYP
- If Title I, offer Supplemental Educational Services
- If Title I school, offer School Choice
- School Improvement Team continues to implement restructuring plan
- Complete and submit Assurance form by 9/16/14
- Review, Revise, and Implement GMS Restructuring Plan

Waterbury / Duxbury

#### Year 5 Corrective Action (Yr 4 restructuring)

- Continue SU-level and school-level Improvement Teams
- Provide written notice to parents that school has not met AYP
- If Title I, offer Supplemental Educational Services
- If Title I school, offer School Choice
- Complete and submit Assurance Form by 9/16/14
- Systemic assessment of school and district using Green Mountain Star (Year 5 and some former SIG only)
- Submit Intent to Restructure School Governance Form 5/31/15
- Continuous Improvement Plan with Restructuring Plan due 5/31/15
- If a Restructuring Plan was completed in 2014-2015 using Green Mountain Star, continue implementing that plan





# Vermont State Board of Education Education Quality Standards

## ANNOTATED VERSION

**This version contains guidance statements from the Agency of Education.**

### State Board Rule 2000

Effective April 5, 2014

*The purpose of these rules is to ensure that all students in Vermont public schools are afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality, and enable them to achieve or exceed the standards approved by the State Board of Education.*

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**2110 Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of these rules is to ensure that all students in Vermont public schools are afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality, and enable them to achieve or exceed the standards approved by the State Board of Education.

These rules are designed to ensure continuous improvement in student performance, instruction and leadership to enable students to attain rigorous standards in high-quality programs.

Nothing herein shall be construed to entitle any student to educational programs or services identical to those received by other students in the same or different school districts. Further, nothing herein shall create a private right of action. These rules are in addition to and, unless otherwise specifically stated, do not supersede other rules contained in the Vermont State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices.

**2111 Adoption of Performance Standards**

Pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §164(9), the State Board of Education will implement and periodically update standards for student learning in appropriate content areas from kindergarten to grade 12. Supervisory union boards shall use the standards as the basis for the development and selection of curriculum, methods of instruction, locally developed assessments, and the content and skills taught and learned in school.

**2112 Education Quality Standards**

In order to carry out Vermont's policy that all public school children will be afforded educational opportunities which are substantially equal in quality, and in order to ensure continuous improvement in student performance, each public school shall meet the following education quality standards, and annually report to the community in an understandable and comprehensive form as required in 16 V.S.A. §165(a)(2).

**2113 Federal and State Entitlements; Nondiscrimination**

Each school or supervisory union shall ensure that students are furnished educational and other services in accordance with state and federal entitlements and requirements.

No student in a public school or independent school shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity as the result of, or based upon, the student's race, gender, color, creed, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability, or any other reason set forth in state or federal non-discrimination requirements.

Each supervisory union shall develop, and each school shall implement, a system of maintaining student records that aligns with Agency of Education statewide data collections; which enables accurate and timely reporting in connection with state and federal data collection requirements; and ensures the accuracy, relevancy and confidentiality thereof, and accessibility thereto; and which is in compliance with the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 95-380 as amended from time to time).

Student records shall be safely retained. For grades 9-12, the transcripts of graduates and dropouts shall be permanently maintained and the academic records may be permanently maintained.

Each school shall adopt and implement policies consistent with the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Act (20 U.S.C. §1232h) regarding surveys, analyses and evaluations.

**2114 Definitions**

The following definitions shall apply to these rules unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

1. "Academic record" may include standardized test scores, dates of attendance, alternate graduation plan, Personalized Learning Plan, rank in class, awards, activities, clubs and other information not included in a student's transcript, as locally determined.
2. "Applied learning" means the presentation of subject matter in a way that integrates a particular academic discipline (such as mathematics, science or

English) with life experiences both in school and out of school and with personal workforce applications.

3. "Appropriately licensed educator" means any teacher or administrator requiring a license under 16 V.S.A. Chapter 51 and in accordance with the Rules Governing the Licensing of Educators and the Preparation of Educational Professionals.
4. "Career and Technical Education" means an educational program that supports attainment of a high school diploma, designed to provide students with technical knowledge, skills and aptitudes that will prepare them for further education and enhance their employment options or lead to an industry-recognized credential.
5. "College and Career Readiness" means the student's ability to enter the workforce or pursue postsecondary education or training without the need for remediation. The student must possess the foundational skills and learning strategies necessary to begin studies in a career pathway in order to be considered college and career ready.
6. "Educational Technology" means instruction and/or preparation in the appropriate use of current technology to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to communicate, solve problems, and to access, manage, integrate, evaluate and create information.
7. "Mentoring" means the pairing of a mentor with an educator who is either new to the profession or new to the school in order to provide training, orientation, assistance and support. Further, for the purposes of this rule, a "mentor" is an educator who has demonstrated high-quality instructional practice and who has been provided training in mentoring.
8. "Needs-based professional learning" means staff learning based upon needs identified through an examination of student performance and organizational and instructional data, and which is aligned with the school's Continuous Improvement Plan.
9. "Personalized Learning Plan" means a plan developed on behalf of a student by the student, a representative of the school, and, if the student is a minor, the student's parents or legal guardian, and updated at least annually. The plan shall be developmentally appropriate and shall reflect the student's emerging abilities, aspirations, interests and dispositions. Beginning no later than in the seventh grade, the plan shall define the scope and rigor of academic and experiential opportunities necessary for the student to successfully complete secondary school and attain college and career readiness.

10. "Proficiency-based learning" and "proficiency-based graduation" refers to systems of instruction, assessment, grading and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn before they progress to the next lesson, get promoted to the next grade level, or receive a diploma.
11. "School" means an organizational structure designed to facilitate student learning. This could include an individual public school building or a combination of public school buildings with one administration, either of which could include learning opportunities both within and outside of the school building and school day. Where the context suggests that a "school" take some action, the action shall be taken by the superintendent or such school officials as are designated by the superintendent, unless otherwise specified herein or elsewhere in law or regulation. "School" includes a technical center.
12. "Secretary" means the Secretary of Education or his or her designee.
13. "Superintendent" means the superintendent of schools or person or persons assigned the duties of a superintendent pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §242.
14. "Supervisory union" means an administrative, planning, and educational service unit created by the State Board of Education, which consists of two or more school districts, including a supervisory district. For the purpose of these rules, supervisory union also means a supervisory district which consists of only one school district, which may be a unified union district.
15. "Technology Integration" means the infusion of technology into the curriculum as a tool to enhance learning in a content area or multidisciplinary setting, enabling students to select technology tools to help them obtain information in a timely manner, analyze and synthesize the information, and present it professionally.
16. "Transcript" means a formal document certifying and documenting a student's or former student's achievement of state standards and at minimum includes the student's name, date of birth, last known address, years of attendance, courses taken, out-of-school learning opportunities if applicable, and diploma or certificate of completion awarded.
17. "Transferable skills" refers to a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are believed to be critically important to success in today's world, particularly in collegiate programs and modern careers.

## **2120 Curriculum and Instruction**

### **2120.1 Instructional Practices**

Instructional practices shall promote personalization for each student, and enable each student to successfully engage in the curriculum and meet the graduation requirements. Classroom instruction shall include a range of research-based instructional practices that most effectively improve student learning, as identified by national and Vermont guidance and locally collected and analyzed student data.

### **2120.2 Flexible Pathways**

Schools must provide students the opportunity to experience learning through flexible and multiple pathways, including but not limited to career and technical education, virtual learning, work-based learning, service learning, dual enrollment and early college. Learning must occur under the supervision of an appropriately licensed educator. Learning expectations must be aligned with state expectations and standards.

Students must be allowed to demonstrate proficiency by presenting multiple types of evidence, including but not limited to teacher- or student-designed assessments, portfolios, performances, exhibitions and projects.

### **2120.3 Career and Technical Education**

Schools serving grades 9-12 shall coordinate with their designated career and technical education center to ensure genuine access and support for all eligible students as required in 16 V.S.A. §1541a.

Schools shall ensure that students receive appropriate career counseling and program information regarding the availability of education and apprenticeship program offerings at career and technical centers. Demonstrations of learning such as credits or grades earned in an approved career and technical education course or program are subject to the requirements of 16 V.S.A. §1545.

### **2120.4 Personalized Learning Plans**

As required in 16 V.S.A. §941, schools shall ensure all students in grades seven through 12 shall have a Personalized Learning Plan, which shall be a written document

developed by the student, a representative of the school and, if the student is a minor, the student's parent or legal guardian. The Personalized Learning Plan shall describe the scope and rigor of learning opportunities and support services necessary for the student to achieve college and career readiness prior to graduation, and to attain a high school diploma. This plan must be reviewed at least annually.

**ANNOTATION:** Act 77 also establishes this requirement and phases in the implementation over four years beginning with the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students of SY15/16. Note the inclusion of support services and refer to section 2121.5.

This section is effective in accordance with the rolling implementation dates established in Section 14 of Act 77 of 2013, as may be amended.

#### 2120.5 Curriculum Content

Each supervisory union board shall ensure the written and delivered curriculum within their supervisory union is aligned with the standards approved by the State Board of Education. Each school shall enable students to engage annually in rigorous, relevant and comprehensive learning opportunities that allows them to demonstrate proficiency in

- a. literacy (including critical thinking, language, reading, speaking and listening, and writing);
- b. mathematical content and practices (including numbers, operations, and the concepts of algebra and geometry by the end of grade 10);
- c. scientific inquiry and content knowledge (including the concepts of life sciences, physical sciences, earth and space sciences and engineering design);
- d. global citizenship (including the concepts of civics, economics, geography, world language, cultural studies and history);
- e. physical education and health education as defined in 16 V.S.A. §131;
- f. artistic expression (including visual, media and performing arts); and
- g. transferable skills (including communication, collaboration, creativity, innovation, inquiry, problem solving and the use of technology).

**ANNOTATION:** Within the minimum expectations above, responsibility for curriculum development and delivery resides with the SU and that curriculum must be aligned with the standards adopted by the State Board of Education. Note that student demonstration of proficiency is applied to the broad categories above, not to each standard.

Each school shall provide students in grades K-8 with at least two physical education classes per week. Each school shall provide students in grades 9-12 with one and one-half years of physical education or the equivalent thereof.

Each school shall offer options for students in grades K-12 to participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity within or outside of the school day. Physical activity may include recess and movement built into the curriculum, but does not replace physical education classes.

Each school shall provide appropriate learning opportunities to all students to support their attainment of the standards approved by the State Board of Education. As required in 16 V.S.A. §2902, each public school shall provide support for students who require additional assistance in order to succeed or be challenged in the general education environment.

Each school shall provide comprehensive elementary and secondary health and physical education learning experiences, including the effects of tobacco, alcohol and drugs on the human system for all students in accordance with sections 16 V.S.A. §131 and §906(b)(3).

Each school shall ensure students are able to access academic and experiential learning opportunities that reflect their emerging abilities, interests and aspirations, as outlined in the students' Personalized Learning Plans.

#### **2120.6 Curriculum Coordination**

As required in 16 V.S.A. §261a(a)(1), the board of each supervisory union shall ensure that each school implements the supervisory union's written and delivered curriculum, which shall be

- a. aligned with the standards approved by the State Board of Education;
- b. coordinated across all grades to prepare students for graduation;
- c. coordinated across the supervisory union, including sending high schools and technical centers;
- d. informed by ongoing review of new research, changing learning opportunities, and updates to the standards approved by the State Board of Education;
- e. designed to enable all students to achieve the graduation requirements; and

- f. integrated with technology across all disciplines.

**ANNOTATION:** *This section refers to the curriculum developed under section 2120.5 and establishes the expectation that the implementation of that curriculum will be coordinated across the supervisory union.*

Each school with a pre-kindergarten early education program must offer high-quality programs as outlined in State Board Rule 2600.

### **2120.7 Graduation Requirements**

A student meets the requirements for graduation when the student demonstrates evidence of proficiency in the curriculum outlined in 2120.5, and completion of any other requirements specified by the local board of the school attended by the student.

**ANNOTATION:** *As has previously been true, responsibility for establishing graduation requirements resides with the local school board. While local boards previously have had the authority to base graduation decisions on the demonstration of proficiency, that is now the sole means for determining progress and graduation.*

This requirement is effective no later than September 2014 for students entering seventh grade and through their secondary school progression, for the anticipated graduation date of June 2020, and with each subsequent incoming seventh grade class.

**ANNOTATION:** *This establishes the expectation that the transition to a proficiency-based system for determining progress and graduation will begin with the incoming 7<sup>th</sup> grade students of 2014 and be phased in over the following years. If this timing is compared with the phase-in of the PLP requirement, it will be noted that this initial group of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students will not be required to have PLPs until their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. While these two requirements (i.e. PLP and proficiency) can be seen as distinct, schools may wish to consider the implications of this difference in timing.*

For students eligible for special education services under IDEA or protected by Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act, the student shall meet the same graduation requirements as non-disabled peers in an accommodated and/or modified manner. These modifications will be documented in each student's Personalized Learning Plan.

The Individual Education Program (IEP) team or 504 Team is responsible for assuring

that information regarding the student's individual skills, aptitudes and present levels of performance are incorporated into the student's Personalized Learning Plan. This shall ensure that the proficiency levels to meet graduation requirements are linked to local graduation requirements, individually accommodated and/or modified for students with disabilities, and written into the student's Personalized Learning Plan.

This process shall ensure that any student identified as a student with a disability will receive a regular high school diploma after meeting his/her individual graduation requirements as outlined in their Personalized Learning Plan. The development of an IEP does not supplant a Personalized Learning Plan, nor does a Personalized Learning Plan replace an IEP.

*ANNOTATION: With the completed phase-in of the PLP requirement, all students in grades 7 through 12 will have a PLP. Some students will have an IEP in addition to their PLP. While the PLP will describe the "scope and rigor of learning opportunities and support services necessary for the student to ... attain a high school diploma", the IEP will describe any accommodations that may be necessary in order to fulfill the expectations of the PLP.*

#### **2120.8 Local Graduation Requirements**

Each secondary school board is responsible for setting graduation requirements in accordance with these rules.

Local graduation policy must define proficiency-based graduation requirements based on standards adopted by the State Board of Education. As required in 16 V.S.A. §261a(a)(1), it is the responsibility of the supervisory union board to ensure alignment in expectations for all students within a supervisory union.

Schools may or may not use credits for the purposes of demonstrating that a student has met the graduation requirements. When used, credits must specify the proficiencies demonstrated in order to attain a credit and shall not be based on time spent in learning. Further, students may receive credit for learning that takes place outside of the school, the school day, or the classroom. Any credits earned must occur under the supervision of an appropriately licensed educator.

*ANNOTATION: This section allows for credits to be used for the purpose of documenting student achievement. However, credit accumulation must be based on demonstration of proficiency. This section also reiterates the belief that learning and the*

*demonstration of learning may take place in any setting, at any time, provided that it is under the "supervision of an appropriately licensed educator".*

## **2121 Professional Resources**

### **2121.1 School Leadership**

The roles and responsibilities of the school's leadership, including the school board, superintendent and principal or career and technical center director shall conform to applicable provisions in 16 V.S.A. regarding authority and duties.

All school leaders must have sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities in order to focus on improving student learning. To accomplish that, the superintendent or his or her designee must:

- a. supervise a licensed principal who shall be responsible for the day-to-day leadership of the school;
- b. create a school leadership team consisting of administrators and teachers (and students as appropriate) with compensation either in time or financial reimbursement or a combination of both for all teachers;
- c. create professional learning groups for all teachers that meet during school time at least two hours per month and are facilitated by trained teachers;
- d. coordinate the principal's schedule to enable him/her to engage in student learning, such as:
  1. teaching a course or hosting an advisory with students;
  2. mentoring a group of students in developing their Personalized Learning Plans;
  3. providing support for students through support services; or
  4. other methods of student engagement as approved by the superintendent.
- e. provide teacher support and evaluation aligned with the guidelines approved by the State Board of Education; and
- f. minimize, as much as possible, supervision of non-teaching staff by the principal.

The principal shall be answerable to the superintendent in the performance of his or her

duties.

Schools with 10 or more full-time equivalent teachers shall employ a full-time licensed principal. Schools with fewer than 10 FTE teachers shall employ a licensed principal on a pro-rata basis.

#### 2121.2 Staff

As required in 16 V.S.A. §1692, all professional staff shall be licensed and appropriately endorsed for their assignment. All classroom staff, including educational support personnel, shall have had adequate academic preparation and training to teach or provide services in the area to which they are assigned.

Each school shall employ instructional and administrative staff members who possess the knowledge and skills to implement the standards in alignment with professional educator standards established by the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators.

Each supervisory union shall employ licensed special education staff, and shall ensure each school employs sufficient and qualified staff as needed to identify students eligible for special education services and to implement each eligible student's Individual Education Program and Section 504 plan.

Classes in grades K-3, when taken together, shall average fewer than 20 students per teacher. In grades 4-12, when taken together, classes shall average fewer than 25 students per teacher. The total class roll of a teacher shall not exceed 100 students, except where the specific nature of the teacher's assignment (such as in certain art, music, or physical education programs) is plainly adaptable to the teaching of greater numbers of students while meeting the educational goals of the program.

School boards must establish optimum class size policies as consistent with statutory guidance from the Agency of Education. Class size must comply with state and federal safety requirements.

**ANNOTATION:** *As compared to SQS language, this allows greater discretion to be exercised at the local level in determining appropriate total class rolls. This language places the responsibility for sound policy with the local school board.*

The services of a certified library media specialist shall be made available to students and staff. Schools with over 300 students shall have at least one full-time library media specialist and sufficient staff to implement a program that supports literacy, information and technology standards. Schools with fewer than 300 students shall employ a library media specialist on a pro-rata basis.

### **2121.3 Needs-Based Professional Learning**

Each supervisory union shall develop and implement a system of appropriate needs-based professional learning for all professional staff, including administrators and other staff involved in student instruction, as required in 16 V.S.A. §261a(a)(5). Time for professional learning should be embedded into the school day.

The school's professional learning system shall be aligned with its staff evaluation and supervision policies, Continuous Improvement Plan, supervisory union and district goals, and shall provide new staff members with appropriate opportunities for professional learning.

Mentoring shall be a component of each supervisory union's needs-based professional learning system. The superintendent or their designee shall determine the specifics of each mentoring program in their school(s) in accordance with the guidelines approved by the State Board of Education, Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators, and state law addressing mentoring for educators.

**ANNOTATION:** *This section places responsibility for professional learning at the SU and superintendent level. While professional learning may be carried out at the school level, it must be in alignment with district goals.*

### **2121.4 Staff Evaluation**

For the purposes of this section, "staff" includes administrators, educators, and other school employees working with students.

Staff evaluation programs and policies shall be designed and implemented with the goal of improved student outcomes. Such programs and policies shall

- a. be consistent with the provisions of state and federal law and the Vermont Guidelines of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness adopted by the State Board of

Education;

- b. include multiple sources of evidence to inform and measure teacher performance;
- c. address the professional learning needs of all staff, including administrators;
- d. address the needs of teachers who are new to the profession, the assignment or the school;
- e. provide supports to improve instructional practice, content knowledge, working relationships (with colleagues, parents and community members), and other areas as appropriate.

### 2121.5 Tiered System of Support

In accordance with 16 V.S.A. §2902 and State Board Rule 2194, each school shall ensure that a tiered system of academic and behavioral supports is in place to assist all students in working toward attainment of the standards. This system shall be aligned with the school's Personalized Learning Plan structures, and specific student support services shall be specified within a student's Personalized Learning Plan.

*ANNOTATION: The language of this section reflects the intention that every student's experience be personalized and documented in a PLP. The "Tiered System of Support" replaces the Educational Support System and is applicable to every student, not just for the purpose of ameliorating special education services.*

School counseling services shall support the mission and vision of the school and shall be available to all students K-12. The services shall address students' academic, career, personal and social development. Such services shall be aligned and integrated with the work of other professionals in the school setting, as well as those in other educational and human services.

Staffing shall be filled by licensed school counselors and other student support personnel with sufficient staff to carry out the school counseling services, such as guidance counselors, Student Assistance Program counselors, home-school coordinators, English-as-a-Second-Language coordinators and school-based clinicians. At the elementary level, there shall be no more than 300 students per school counselor and other student support personnel. Schools with fewer than 300 students shall employ a school counselor and other student support personnel on a pro-rata basis. At

the secondary level, there shall be no more than 200 students per school counselor and other student support personnel.

Health services, including health appraisal and counseling, communicable disease control, mental health, and emergency and first aid care, shall be made available in a confidential manner to students in each school. These health services shall be delivered in accordance with the school district's written policies and procedures, which shall be developed in collaboration with parents and community health resources.

The Vermont Department of Health recommends that schools and supervisory unions implement the School Nurse Leader School Health Services Delivery Model, which is consistent with the principles of the national Coordinated School Health Model, to ensure appropriate access and coverage across their district or supervisory union.

Each school shall engage the services of a person licensed as a School Nurse or Associate School Nurse. There shall be no more than 500 students per school nurse. Schools with fewer than 500 students shall employ a nurse on a pro-rata basis.

The school shall comply with requirements of state law relative to vision and hearing screening, immunization, and child abuse reporting, and federal law relating to invasive physical examinations in accordance with the Protection of Pupil Rights Act (20 U.S.C.§1232h).

#### **2121.6 Interagency Teams**

Schools shall participate in interagency teams as required by 33 V.S.A. §4303 and any other requirement of law.

#### **2122 Learning Environment**

##### **2122.1 School Facilities and the Learning Environment**

Each school shall maintain a safe, orderly, civil, flexible and positive learning environment, which is free from hazing, harassment and bullying and based on sound instructional and classroom management practices and clear discipline and attendance policies that are consistently and effectively enforced.

The design and operation of the school facilities shall be in full compliance with all state

and federal fire, health, and safety, chemical and architectural standards.

Each school's comprehensive plan for responding to student misbehavior, as required by 16 V.S.A. §1161a(a), shall address student behavior, language, classroom attendance, clothing and treatment of property, as well as consequences for violations of policy, and shall be clear and consistently enforced.

Each school shall observe due process requirements as set forth in Rule 4300 *et seq.*

#### **2122.2 Access to Instructional Materials**

Each school shall:

- a. provide a learning environment with sufficient supplies and infrastructure to allow for learning;
- b. develop, maintain, and expand as needed a collection of print, digital and technology resources, administered by a certified library media specialist;
- c. ensure that the curriculum is supported by necessary digital and print resources;
- d. ensure that students, teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals have access to an organized collection of digital and print materials sufficient and appropriate to support all students in meeting or exceeding the current state and national standards at no cost to the student;
- e. provide students access to the library on a regular basis to use materials for reading, research, and for instruction in the skills needed to select and use information effectively;
- f. provide access to a variety of up-to-date information, assistive, and other technology to support students in meeting or exceeding the standards;
- g. provide broadband Internet service for students and educators to access educational resources;
- h. adopt and implement written policies on electronic resources, acceptable Internet usage, and procedures for handling complaints for both staff and students;
- i. support a schedule that provides opportunities for a library media specialist to collaborate with teachers as they integrate information research skills into their curriculum; and
- j. ensure that students are afforded the opportunity to learn the skills to locate, evaluate, synthesize, and to present information and ideas within content areas using technology integration.

## **2123 State and Local Comprehensive Assessment System**

### **2123.1 Participation in the State Comprehensive Assessment System**

Each school shall administer assessments of student performance using methods developed by the State Board of Education under 16 V.S.A. §164 (9). Students who are unable to participate in district or state assessments shall be given an alternate assessment in accordance with law. Each school shall account for 100 percent of its students in regard to their participation in the state assessments.

### **2123.2 Development and Implementation of Local Comprehensive Assessment System**

Each supervisory union shall develop, and each school shall implement, a local comprehensive assessment system that

- a. assesses the standards approved by the State Board of Education;
- b. employs a balance of assessment types, including but not limited to, teacher- or student-designed assessments, portfolios, performances, exhibitions and projects;
- c. includes both formative and summative assessments;
- d. enables decisions to be made about student progression and graduation, including measuring proficiency-based learning;
- e. informs the development of Personalized Learning Plans and student support;
- f. provides data that informs decisions regarding instruction, professional learning, and educational resources and curriculum; and
- g. reflects strategies and goals outlined in the district's Continuous Improvement Plan.

The performance criteria of the assessment system shall be clear and be communicated to teachers, administrators, students, parents and other community members. Students and parents shall be informed at least annually regarding progress toward achieving the standards.

This includes providing information in students' native languages or otherwise accessible formats.

Implementation and support by the Agency will be determined by the Secretary.

#### **2124 Reporting of Results**

As required in 16 V.S.A. §165(a)(2), each school shall report student and system performance results to the community at least annually in a format selected by the school board. The report shall at minimum include those elements listed in 16 V.S.A. §165a(2)(A-K).

The performance criteria of the school shall be clear and be communicated to administrators, educators and other building staff.

Each supervisory union shall establish a secure student data system that enables regular access for teachers and administrators. Teachers shall have access to data on individual students whom they teach and aggregate data on student and system performance results. Administrators shall have access to individual student data and on student and system performance results.

For aggregate school data, in no case shall personally identifiable information on any student be revealed.

#### **2125 Continuous Improvement Plan**

A Continuous Improvement Plan, as required in 16 V.S.A. §165, shall be developed and implemented in each public school district. The plan shall be designed to improve the performance of all students enrolled in the district. If a school district comprises more than one school building, a combined plan for some or all the buildings may be developed. The plan, however, may reflect the different needs of individual schools.

The plan should be the overall planning and implementation document for the school, incorporating other planning requirements (either from the state, the federal government, local requirements, or external grant requirements) into a single planning document.

**ANNOTATION:** *The intention of this section is to move the school and district planning processes into a continuous improvement model and to consolidate what may be multiple assessment and data gathering processes into a single comprehensive plan.*

The plan shall be developed with the involvement of school board members, students,

teachers, administrators, parents and other community members. The plan shall be reviewed at least annually for effectiveness toward meeting the stated goals, and shall be revised as necessary.

The plan shall include indicators provided by the Vermont Agency of Education as well as additional indicators determined locally. These indicators will identify student performance data obtained from state and local assessments and other information related to student performance which may include, but is not limited to, dropout and retention rates, attendance, course enrollment patterns and graduation rates. Indicators may also include data on school practices and leadership.

Agency support shall be differentiated in accordance with school needs, and shall work to reduce interventions for schools where student performance data indicates growth and success.

*ANNOTATION: This paragraph acknowledges the fact that the federally-mandated accountability system fails to recognize discernable growth and success that should be considered in Agency decisions regarding intervention and support. The Agency is engaged in an effort to build a balanced accountability model capable of recognizing and appropriately responding to more subtle differences in student and school performance.*

The school board shall approve the plan, which at minimum shall contain

- a. goals and objectives for improved student learning;
- b. educational strategies and activities specifically designed to achieve these goals, including professional learning of administrative and instructional staff;
- c. strategies and supports to ensure the school maintains a safe, orderly, civil and positive learning environment which is free from harassment, hazing and bullying; and
- d. required technical assistance from the Vermont Agency of Education as appropriate or determined by law.

## **2126 System for Determining Compliance with Education Quality Standards**

### **2126.1 Filing of Continuous Improvement Plan**

On a two-year cycle published by the Agency, each school is required to file a copy of the school's Continuous Improvement Plan for the current school year. This includes listing of the indicators (both those required by the Vermont Agency of Education and

additional indicators as desired for use by the school) used for reflection and creation of the school's Continuous Improvement Plan; a description of the accomplishments, progress and changes regarding goals and strategies from the previous year's Continuous Improvement Plan and other evidence of meeting Education Quality Standards.

#### **2126.2 Review, Secretary's Recommendations, and State Board Action**

The Vermont Agency of Education will conduct a review of all Vermont schools using one or more of the following strategies:

1. All Continuous Improvement Plans will be reviewed by Agency staff, with assistance from other Vermont educators in a peer review process, as required or desired. Each school will receive feedback from this review.
2. To meet the state accountability standards (which comply with federal accountability requirements), schools will be expected to develop and revise their Continuous Improvement Plan based on the Secretary's recommendations, accountability status and student outcomes. The Agency may choose to differentiate support and requirements for individual schools based on identified needs.
3. On an annual basis, the Agency will identify schools for an Education Quality Standards Review. All schools, regardless of accountability status, will be eligible for this review. The Secretary of Education will determine the requirements and outcomes of this review, including a peer review system between schools. The review will be based on the requirements of this rule to ensure equity and improved outcomes for students.

#### **2126.3 Further Review; Secretary's Recommendations; State Board Action**

As required in 16 V.S.A. §165 (b), every two years the Secretary shall determine whether students in each Vermont public school are provided educational opportunities substantially equal to those provided in other public schools. If the Secretary determines that a school is not meeting the quality standards, he or she shall recommend actions that a district must take and offer technical assistance. If the school fails to meet the standards or make sufficient progress by the end of the next two-year period, recommendations will be made to the State Board of Education as outlined in 16 V.S.A. §165(b).

16 V.S.A. §165(f) regulates the process for an independent school to be designated as meeting Education Quality Standards, as well as the provision of technical assistance in the event that the State Board finds an independent school not meeting the standards or failing to make progress towards meeting the standards.

#### **2127 Variance and Waiver**

Upon written request of a school board, and after opportunity for hearing, the State Board of Education may approve an alternative method for meeting the requirements of these rules when

- a. the alternative method is consistent with the intent of the rule;
- b. the variance permits the school board to carry out locally-established objectives; and
- c. the granting of the variance does not contravene any state or federal law, any federal regulation, or any rule of any state agency other than the State Board of Education, unless such rules themselves permit the granting of a waiver or variance.

Upon request of a school board, the Secretary may waive class and caseload size requirements where

- a. necessary to carry out locally-established objectives;
- b. student learning will not be adversely affected;
- c. classroom control will not be compromised; and
- d. it is otherwise in the best interests of student learning.

Unless exceptional circumstances are present, the Secretary shall respond to such requests within 10 days.

If any of these rules are in conflict with a provision in an existing collective bargaining agreement, the local board must provide an explanation to the Secretary to that effect, and if appropriate, a plan to address that conflict.

#### **2128 Effective Date**

These rules, except as otherwise specified herein, shall become effective on 15 days after adoption is complete, in accordance with 3 V.S.A. §845(d).

Implementation and support by the Agency will be determined by the Secretary.

(A-4)



219 North Main Street, Suite 402, Barre, VT 05641  
(p) 802-479-1030 | (f) 802-479-1835

JUL 14 2014

## MEMORANDUM

TO: All Superintendents  
FROM: Rebecca Holcombe, Secretary of Education  
SUBJECT: Broadband Access  
DATE: June 16, 2014

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I am certain you share my concern that many of our most needy students don't have access to the information and opportunity that comes with broadband access. We all know as educators that the "Digital Divide" is frustratingly real for many of our most economically challenged students and their families. While there is no single answer to this challenge, I would like to remind you of the Internet Essentials<sup>SM</sup> program from Comcast that began in 2011 and urge you to re-invigorate awareness of this program within your district. The Agency of Education cannot endorse nor sponsor this effort, but we do believe it to be a positive step by a broadband provider operating in Vermont. This program is one of the tools in our collective toolbox that can be called upon to assist our students and families in the acquisition of broadband access.

Internet Essentials provides access to broadband service for \$9.95 per month, an opportunity to purchase a laptop computer for under \$150, and free digital literacy training to our neediest students and their families. If a student is eligible to receive free or reduced-priced lunch through the National School Lunch Program and is in Comcast's service area, they may be eligible for this program. This effort makes access to broadband significantly more affordable and accessible for thousands of Vermont families. While we know that there are a variety of reasons why parents choose not to have broadband in their homes, this program offers solutions to those most common barriers; cost of the service, cost of the computer, and an opinion that broadband isn't relevant to their lives.

Since introducing Internet Essentials, Comcast has worked to expand the program and continues to promote the program through numerous channels to reach as many Vermonters as possible across the state. As we enter the summer months, this seems to be an opportune time to build awareness and let parents prepare for the upcoming school year by continuing their child's education through online tools during the summer months.

Working together, the Agency, parents and broadband providers like Comcast, can make great strides toward eliminating the digital divide in many Vermont

communities. Please join me in sharing the news about Comcast Internet Essentials with your families and students. If this is of interest to you, I urge you to register on the Internet Essentials partner portal to request brochures and letters to be sent directly to your school office at [www.internetessentials.com/partner](http://www.internetessentials.com/partner). You can also reach out to Tuck Rainwater, Comcast Director of Government Affairs, at 802-419-6636 or via email at [Tuck\\_Rainwater@cable.comcast.com](mailto:Tuck_Rainwater@cable.comcast.com). He will be happy to order materials on your behalf.

If you have not already, you may be contacted by a member of the Internet Essentials team to answer any questions you may have about the program. I hope that you will make the time, as I did, to learn more about this exciting program and what it can offer some of our most needy families.

Please feel free to contact Peter Drescher at 802-479-1169 or via email at [peter.drescher@state.vt.us](mailto:peter.drescher@state.vt.us) with any questions or concerns.



July 11, 2014

Brigid Scheffert  
Washington West Supervisory Union  
340 Mad River Park, Suite 7  
Waitsfield, VT 05673

**Re: Internet Essentials<sup>SM</sup> - *Helping to Close the Digital Divide***

Dear Superintendent:

Many low-income families do not have broadband access at home and/or do not have a computer or device capable of supporting high-speed Internet use. As a result, they face profound disadvantages in getting a quality education, strengthening their job skills, obtaining news and entertainment, or accessing the kind of health, educational and financial information that is essential to improving the quality of their lives. As the nation's leading Internet provider, Comcast is helping to close this gap by making the Internet more accessible to more families.

In the summer of 2011, Comcast launched Internet Essentials<sup>SM</sup> – a ground breaking program designed to help close the digital divide. The program provides eligible households with at least one child receiving free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Program with access to low-cost broadband service for \$9.95 a month – no price increases, no activation fees and no equipment rental fees; the option to purchase a low-cost computer at initial enrollment for under \$150; and free digital literacy training.<sup>1</sup> Today, there are over 100,000 low-income families nationally who are enjoying the benefits of being “digitally connected” via the Internet – some for the first time – thanks to Internet Essentials.

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If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [tuck\\_rainwater@cable.comcast.com](mailto:tuck_rainwater@cable.comcast.com) or 802-419-6636.

Sincerely,

Tuck Rainwater  
Director, Government & Community Affairs

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<sup>1</sup> To qualify, families must live where Comcast offers Internet service; have at least one child receiving free or reduced-priced school lunches through the NSLP; have not subscribed to Comcast Internet service within the last 90 days; and do not have an overdue Comcast bill or unreturned equipment.



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CHAPTER 4

# Concentrated Instruction: Where Do We Need to Go?

**Concentrated Instruction:** *A systematic process of identifying essential knowledge and skills that all students must master to learn at high levels, and determining the specific learning needs for each child to get there. Thinking is guided by the question, Where do we need to go?*

Once a school has created a sense of collective responsibility to ensure that all students learn at high levels, the next step is to engage its teachers in a dialogue to help answer the question, if all students are to learn, exactly what is it they must learn?

After synthesizing more than 800 meta-analyses involving many millions of students, John Hattie (2009) identified six “signposts” that point toward excellence in education. One of these signposts from his book *Visible Learning* reads as follows:

Teachers need to know the learning intentions and success criteria of their lessons, know how well they are attaining these criteria, and know where to go next in light of the criteria of: “Where are you going?” “How are you going?” and “Where to next?” (Hattie, 2009, p. 239)

In terms of concentrated instruction, Where are you going? is synonymous with Where are we, as a team of teachers, going with this unit of instruction? Answering this question well is critical to the successful implementation of response to intervention. Without engaging teachers in a collaborative process to clarify exactly what knowledge and skills are essential for students to master, schools will become overwhelmed by attempting to provide interventions for everything in the curriculum.

This chapter will describe a realistic protocol that collaborative teacher teams can use to plan a team teaching–assessing cycle. In this protocol, teams (1) define the knowledge and skills that every student must master in order to be successful in school and in life (that is, Tier 1 core instruction), (2) plan when and how the team will provide additional time and support to those who need it (Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions), (3) and create common formative assessments that will be used to monitor how well the core instructional program is working for each student. Chapter

5 will address the assessment cycle in depth, and chapter 6 will address how to select interventions; this chapter focuses on identifying and clarifying what all students must learn.

The inverted pyramid in figure 4.1 was introduced in chapter 1 as a way of thinking about who is responsible for various components of a system that helps every student experience success. In this chapter we will focus on the upper right portion of the pyramid—on effective core instruction for all students and the interventions provided by collaborative teacher teams as a part of that core instruction. We call this approach to Tier 1 “core and more.”

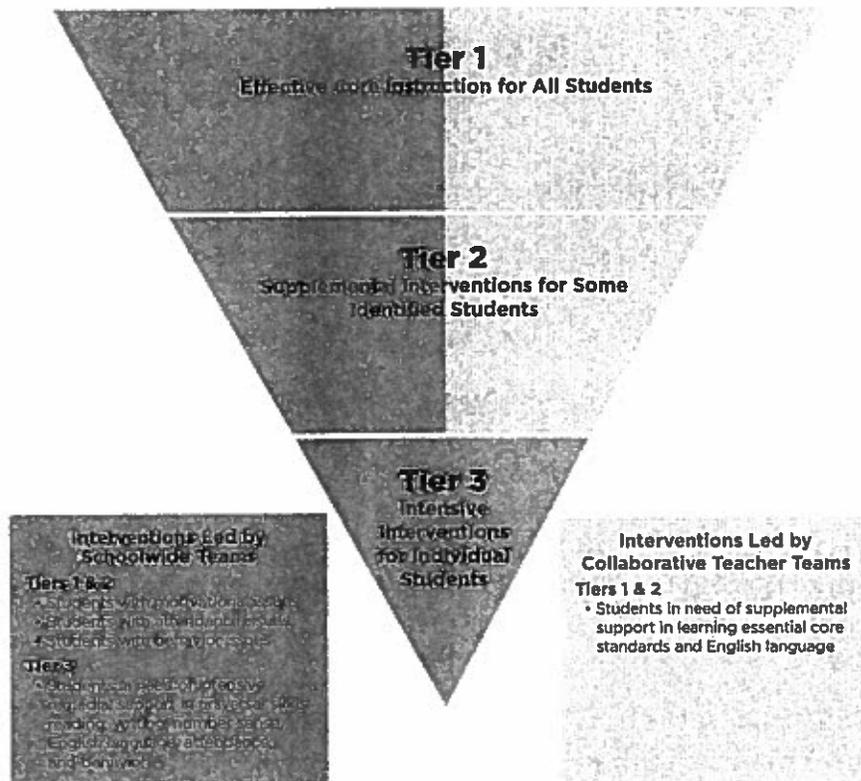


Figure 4.1: Team responsibilities in the inverted RTI pyramid.

## A Focus on Coverage

In the United States, each state has attempted to define what all students must learn, and as a result many American schools and districts have abdicated their responsibility to define essential learnings to the state. Unfortunately, in their well-intentioned attempts to create academic content standards, states have identified far more than can possibly be learned in the amount of time available to teachers. After studying and quantifying this problem at McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and

*Great explanation for reading non-regs*

Learning), Marzano came to the following conclusion: “To cover all of this content, you would have to change schooling from K–12 to K–22. The sheer number of standards is the biggest impediment to implementing standards” (in Scherer, 2001, p. 15).

The process used to create state content standards might help shed some light on this problem. James Popham (2005) describes the process as one of convening subject-matter specialists and asking them to identify what is significant and important about their subject. This typically results in a document that concludes that almost *everything* about their subject is important. Popham adds, “These committees seem bent on identifying skills that they fervently wish students would possess. Regrettably, the resultant litanies of committee-chosen content standards tend to resemble curricular wish lists rather than realistic targets” (2005).

In too many schools, facing an overwhelming amount of content that they must cover, teachers pick and choose the standards they believe will be most beneficial to their students—or even worse, the standards they like to teach. In other schools, realizing that this haphazard approach to determining what students must learn may negatively impact student performance on high-stakes tests, teachers frantically attempt to cover all of the standards equally—even if this means that many students can never truly understand what they are learning or demonstrate mastery of a standard. *When everything is important, nothing is.* Both of these approaches are disastrous for student learning.

## A Focus on Learning

In his book *Accountability for Learning*, Doug Reeves asserts a compelling alternative vision:

We can wait for policymakers to develop holistic accountability plans, or we can be proactive in exceeding the requirements of prevailing accountability systems. If teachers systematically examine their professional practice and their impact on student achievement, the results of such reflective analysis will finally transform educational accountability from a destructive and unifying mess to a constructive and transformative force in education. (Reeves, 2004, p. 6)

Rather than frantically trying to cover everything in the textbook, or treating every standard with the same sense of urgency, teacher teams must be given the time and training to clarify exactly what every student must master. This philosophy, in part, led McKinsey and Company (Barber & Mourshed, 2007) to identify the Singapore school system as one of the best in the world, based primarily on results from the Programme for International School Assessment, which directly compares the quality of education across systems and countries. Rather than identifying an impossible number of standards, the Singapore Ministry of Education adopted “Teach Less, Learn More” as its framework.

Effective core instruction cannot merely cover what is on the state test or plow through the pages of a textbook. In attempting to frame this discussion of “learning

more” for educators, Rick DuFour, Becky DuFour, and Bob Eaker have repeatedly suggested that every collaborative teacher team ask and answer the following four questions:

- 
1. What is it we want our students to learn?
  2. How will we know if each student is learning each of the essential skills, concepts, knowledge, and dispositions that we have deemed most essential?
  3. How will we respond when some of our students do not learn?
  4. How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are already proficient? (DuFour et al., 2010)

It is difficult, if not impossible, for schools to attempt to answer questions 2, 3, and 4 if they have not sufficiently answered the first question. Schools that attempt to build an intervention program before they have clearly identified what is essential for all students to learn are placing the cart before the horse. Therefore, we advocate that teacher teams work together to establish what, exactly, Tier 1 instruction must include for each student to succeed in school and life.

## Identifying Essential Skills and Knowledge

Reeves (2002) has offered one set of criteria that teachers might use to distinguish between what is nice and what is essential for students to know:

- **Endurance**—Will this standard provide students with knowledge and skills that are valuable beyond a single test date?
- **Leverage**—Will it provide knowledge and skills that are valuable in multiple disciplines?
- **Readiness**—Will it provide students with knowledge and skills essential for success in the next grade or level of instruction?

Larry Ainsworth (2003) proposes a similar set of questions: what do your students need for success—in school (this year, next year, and so on), in life, and on state tests? Ainsworth suggests that consideration of state test items might be *part* of the discussion about what is essential for all students to learn, but is not the only consideration.

In 2009, governors and state commissioners of education from forty-eight states, two territories, and the District of Columbia committed to developing a common core of state standards for English language arts and mathematics for grades K–12. At the time of publication, forty-two states and territories and the District of Columbia have voluntarily adopted the standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). The Common Core State Standards provide yet another resource to schools attempting to define what is essential for all students to learn. Questions that schools might want to ask include: How do the Common Core State Standards compare to the district’s “power standards” or to the collaborative team’s identification of what is essential for all students to learn? How does the scaffolding of skills in the common core compare to the results of previously held vertical conversations between teachers in a building or across buildings?

While the Common Core State Standards have attempted, among other things, to lessen the amount of content, they continue to challenge schools to choose between coverage and mastery. As Richard DuFour and Robert Marzano note, "At the fourth-grade level alone the common core includes forty-three standards. . . . When one considers the fact that a busy fourth-grade teacher has only thirty-six weeks and 180 days in the school year, the task of teaching forty-three standards appears daunting if not impossible" (DuFour & Marzano, 2011, p. 93).

Collaborative teams of grade-level or course-alike teachers should discuss, debate, and dialogue about which standards are essential, using all of the resources and criteria just mentioned. As they grapple with these issues, teams should refer to copies of their state content standards, district power standards, the Common Core State Standards, and released test items from state tests, as well as the blueprints for their state tests. The discussion about which standards are most important should not occur in a vacuum. Teams need not begin with a completely blank piece of paper, but should refer to these documents as they attempt to answer the question, What is it we want our students to learn?

We are often asked, who should determine what is essential for all students to learn, the district or teams of teachers? The answer is both! In creating a list of power standards, it is important for the district to understand that without some process that involves teacher teams at each school site, there is likely to be a huge gap between the intended curriculum established by the district and the implemented curriculum taught when teachers shut the doors to their classrooms (Marzano, 2003). It is also important to understand, however, that in choosing essential standards, teachers are not advocating the elimination of certain standards; they are simply "prioritizing the standards and indicators rather than regarding all of them as being equal in importance" (Ainsworth, 2003, p. 6).

### *Get Beyond the List*

Teachers sometimes conceptualize the task of identifying what is essential for all students to learn as making a list, or even worse, as placing checkmarks by or highlighting those standards they deem to be essential. In order to understand the standards at a deep level, the discussion must result in more than checkmarks on a page. The dialogue needs to ensure that team members (1) are interpreting the standard in the same way, (2) have agreement on the level of rigor and what might constitute proficiency, and (3) have identified the prerequisite skills and knowledge necessary for students to be successful in mastering the new standard. Even if we assume that the Common Core State Standards represent the "perfect" answer for every school, for example, simply handing those standards to teachers and telling them to "go forth and teach them" does not guarantee that teachers will interpret them in the same way. Teachers must be involved in a process that helps them to understand essential learnings in a similar way. Participation in this kind of process also helps to ensure that teachers will have greater agreement on the importance of each standard and the pacing of instruction around that standard, both of which facilitate the creation of common assessments by the collaborative team.

Equally important is that this kind of process creates ownership. When teammates engage in this kind of deep, professional discussion, they feel they are helping every student to learn what they have deemed to be essential, as opposed to simply getting students ready to take a test created by a group of faceless, nameless testmakers. This kind of internal ownership is highly desirable and directly supports the development of collective responsibility, as opposed to adherence to a more centralized accountability in which teachers attempt to prepare students based upon what others consider to be important. According to Joan Talbert, “Centralized accountability systems can work against the development of mutual teacher accountability. Their emphasis on near-term gains in test scores pushes a pace of change that undermines the development of PLCs” (Talbert, 2010, p. 560). In a PLC, a team of professional teachers says to its members, “We determined that all students must learn these standards; therefore, we must take responsibility when some students don’t learn.”

### ***Rewrite the Standard Into Teacher-Friendly, Student-Friendly Language***

Rather than create a list of state or district standards with checkmarks placed next to certain standards, we recommend that schools engage teachers in a process and dialogue utilizing the form in figure 4.2 (page 51).

### **Describe the Standard**

In the first column, teams should not simply indicate the number of the standard. Listing *Algebra I Standard 3.1.2* does not reveal much about the standard itself. Simply copying down the wording of the standard as expressed in the state document also does little to ensure that individual teachers are interpreting the standard in a similar fashion. We recommend that teams discuss the standard and together reword it into teacher-friendly and student-friendly language that helps to clarify what the standard actually means, as in figure 4.3.

Description of Standard
Students understand and use the rules of exponents.

Figure 4.3: Description of standard in student-friendly language.

### **Define Rigor**

Next, teacher teams need to grapple with what level of rigor would represent proficiency on this standard. Even if teachers have discussed and clarified what the

What Is It We Expect Students to Learn?						
Grade:	Subject:	Semester:	Team Members:			
Description of Standard	Example of Rigor	Prerequisite Skills	When Taught?	Common Summative Assessment	Extension Standards	
What is the essential standard to be learned? Describe in student-friendly vocabulary.	What does proficient student work look like? Provide an example and/or description.	What prior knowledge, skills, and/or vocabulary are needed for a student to master this standard?	When will this standard be taught?	What assessment(s) will be used to measure student mastery?	What will we do when students have already learned this standard?	

Figure 4.2: Essential standards chart.

continued ↓


*Essential Standards Criteria (Reeves, 2002, p. 54)*

1. **Endurance:** Will this standard provide students with knowledge and skills that are valuable beyond a single test date?
2. **Leverage:** Will it provide knowledge and skills that are valuable in multiple disciplines?
3. **Readiness:** Will it provide students with knowledge and skills essential for success in the next grade/level of instruction?

*For a reproducible version of this tool, visit [go.solution-tree.com/rti](http://go.solution-tree.com/rti) or see page 72.*

standard actually means, this does not ensure that each teacher will expect the same level of rigor. After examining released state test items, benchmark assessments, and other indicators, teams should come to agreement on what students will be able to do as a result of mastering this standard. Figure 4.4 shows an example of rigor for the standard in question. In other instances, the team might say, “See the attached rubric” or “See the attached anchor paper.”

Example of Rigor
Simplify: $5x^3y^7$ $10xy^9$

Figure 4.4: Example of rigor for this standard.

### Identify Prerequisite Skills

Next, teacher teams should discuss what prior knowledge and skills are necessary for students to learn the standard at the level they have defined as proficient (fig. 4.5).

Prerequisite Skills
Multiplying monomials and polynomials

Figure 4.5: Prerequisite knowledge and skills needed for success on the standard.

As we will discuss in chapter 5 on convergent assessment, at the beginning of each school year, or even each unit of instruction, a screening process should take place to identify those students lacking the prerequisite skills identified as necessary for success in the upcoming unit(s). This kind of universal screening (some might even call it a pretest) is directly aligned to those standards the team has determined as essential and should result in an immediate intervention for the identified students. Since the remediation will need to occur as soon as the unit begins, teachers must prepare strategies for remediation during unit planning.

Moreover, imagine the impact on student learning if this intervention were timed to take place *before* initial instruction begins! In our current example, the algebra I team would provide those students who did not demonstrate proficiency in multiplying monomials and polynomials with intervention *before* the unit on understanding and using the rules of exponents begins. This would also be done in such a way as to not pull these students out of core instruction.

### Agree on Pacing and Common Assessment

To plan for intervention in this way, team members must also discuss the pacing of their instruction. In this example, the algebra I team decided to introduce the unit on exponents in February, thus allowing students lacking the necessary prior skills to use the entire month of January to master the prerequisite skills.

At this point in the process, teacher teams might also determine their summative assessment for the unit of instruction. In this case, the team felt confident that the textbook's end-of-chapter test was well constructed and well aligned to their instruction (see fig. 4.6).

When Taught?	Common Summative Assessment
February	Chapter 4

Figure 4.6: Common assessment and pacing.

Different terms have been used to describe the process outlined here. Larry Ainsworth (2003) and Doug Reeves (2002) refer to *power standards*, Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins (2004) to *identifying desired results*, Robert Marzano (2007) to a *guaranteed and viable curriculum*, and John Hattie (2009) to the question, *Where are we going? Whatever terms a school uses, it must engage teacher teams in an ongoing process that leads to deeper understanding of what they want all students to learn.*

### Identify Extension Standards

While the collaborative team is determining what is essential for all students to learn, we believe that some consideration should be given, in advance, to how the team might provide meaningful enrichment and extension for those students who demonstrate that they have already mastered these same standards. Rather than beginning the instructional cycle and then discovering (and teams are probably not surprised) that some students already know the materials, why not identify what might truly provide an extension to these students' learning rather than simply assigning them busywork? Just as teachers must plan to provide immediate remediation to students who lack prior skills, so too should they plan to provide immediate enrichment to students who have already mastered the standard. This can be done in several ways. Teachers can make the actual content more rigorous; make the process or activities in which the students engage more rigorous; or make the culminating product, which applies what students have learned, more rigorous (Tomlinson, 2000).

### Plan for Extra Time and Support

After clarifying what all students must learn, defining the level of rigor, identifying the prior skills needed for success, and agreeing on the instructional pace and summative assessment for the unit, teacher teams should next develop a general plan for remediation, intervention, and enrichment.

No matter how well we teach a unit, it is likely that some students will not be prepared for the instruction and will require some additional help around prerequisite skills (remediation). In addition, some students, although they possess the prior skills needed, might still struggle with the learning and require some additional time and support (intervention). Finally, other students will breeze through the unit because they have already mastered the material, and they will require some enrichment and extension. Rather than reacting to these scenarios as they occur, teacher teams should proactively prepare for each of these eventualities as part of their overall plan for the trimester, quarter, or semester.

### ***Unwrap the Standards Into Learning Targets***

Decades ago, it might have been sufficient to describe what students will learn in school as “reading, ’riting and ’rithmetic.” While the three Rs are still important, they alone are vastly insufficient in defining what students must learn.

Once a teacher team has determined the essential standards for the trimester, quarter, or semester, it’s time to drill down deeper into all of the component parts that provide the underpinning for a standard. This can be a time-consuming process, and for this reason we recommend that teams first complete the *Essential Standards Chart* (page 72) for a unit, trimester, or quarter of instruction. Then, as time permits, teams should drill deeper into two or three essential standards. We recommend that teams do not spend the entire school year drilling deeper until they have reached initial agreement on what is essential. We can’t wait an entire school year to impact student learning. Each year, a team can drill deeper into more of what has been determined to be essential until a detailed plan has been developed.

Beyond simply rewording the standard into teacher-friendly, student-friendly language, teachers need to tightly align these standards with their curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This process of alignment is described by many different terms: *unwrapping* the standards, *unraveling* the standards, *unpacking* the standards, or *deconstructing* the standards, to name a few. All of these approaches have one end in mind: to make the process of using standards more manageable and to ensure that teachers understand and interpret the standards in the same way. For the purpose of consistency, we use the term *unwrapping* to describe this process.

Some standards are discrete and describe a specific target: “Students count, read, and write whole numbers up to 100” (California Content Standards, Number Sense Standard 1.1; California Department of Education, 2000). However, other standards encapsulate many learning targets: “Students know plant and animal cells contain many thousands of different genes and typically have two copies of every gene. The two copies (or alleles) of the gene may or may not be identical, and one may be dominant in determining the phenotype while the other is recessive” (California Content Standards, Life Science—Genetics, Standard 2d; California Department of Education, 2000). It is especially important to unwrap a standard such as the latter example to identify and describe everything that students must know and be able to do. These statements of intended learning for students are called *learning targets*.

Once a standard has been unwrapped into a number of learning targets, teachers can build their assessments at the target level, rather than attempting to assess an entire standard. A general guideline to increase the reliability of such assessments is to use three to five questions or “prompts” per learning target (Prometric Services, 2011).

Many helpful books exist that can guide teacher teams in how to unwrap their essential standards; we will not attempt to do so in this book. However, we do want to emphasize the importance of this process to RTI, because outlining specific learning targets early on helps us to better respond later when students don't learn, by addressing the causes of student struggles rather than the symptoms. Focusing interventions based upon discrete learning targets (not the entire standard) will be discussed at length in chapter 6.

Imagine the following scenario. A teacher is asked to work with a group of students who have failed to learn Life Science Standard 2d: “Students know plant and animal cells contain many thousands of different genes and typically have two copies of every gene. The two copies (or alleles) of the gene may or may not be identical, and one may be dominant in determining the phenotype while the other is recessive” (California Content Standards, Life Science—Genetics, Standard 2d; California Department of Education, 2000). The only data the teacher has is that all of these students have failed this standard. Knowing only that broad information, the teacher is likely to start from the beginning of the unit and reteach the whole standard to the entire group of students. But the fact that the students failed is a *symptom*, not a *diagnosis*. Have they failed because they don't understand what an allele is? Because they don't understand why alleles are found in pairs? Because they don't understand which cells do not have pairs of alleles? If the middle school science team had unwrapped Life Science Standard 2d into these discrete learning targets *before* the lesson, when some students struggled later, the teacher could have gathered information about each student's learning relative to each target and grouped the students for intervention based on the precise *cause* of their struggles.

This need to measure precise progress and offer targeted interventions is why unwrapping essential standards is so critical to the successful implementation of RTI.

## Building Common Formative Assessments

Now that the collaborative teacher team has identified which standards are essential for all students to master and has unwrapped some or all of those standards into learning targets, the team is ready to build common formative assessments to help teachers answer the question, *Where are we now?* and to help students answer, *Where am I now?* These assessments, linked to individual learning targets rather than an entire standard, allow the collaborative team to focus on causes rather than symptoms when students struggle.

Formative assessment is intended to generate feedback that can be used to improve and accelerate student learning (Sadler, 1998). When teachers use formative assessment in this way, students can learn in six to seven months what will normally take an entire

## Management of Life-Threatening Food Allergies Thatcher Brook Primary School

### Introduction

With food allergies on the rise in school aged children, the following guidelines were adapted from the National School Boards Association, the National Association of School Nurses, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Vermont Department of Health, and Agency of Education to promote the safety of children with life-threatening food allergies.

While following these guidelines will help to minimize risk and exposure, Thatcher Brook Primary School (TBPS) cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment for all students with life-threatening allergies. The goal is that all staff can follow these procedures to minimize risk of exposure to an allergen and respond to a life-threatening allergic reaction.

### Identification

All parents are required annually to fill out the school's health information form. New registrants (e.g. Kindergarteners and transfer students) are required to fill out additional health information identifying any food or other allergies.

The school nurse will work with parents/families to obtain the medical information necessary to develop a plan for students with known allergies. Managing the individual's care and emergency response plan depends on this information. This may include but is not limited to, history of reaction, recent exposures, change in health or diagnosis, and last visit with allergist or primary care provider. The school nurse will inform parents of students with life-threatening allergies of applicable provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in writing on a yearly basis and assist in the development of a 504 plan as necessary.

### Training

#### *Staff*

General training regarding food allergies will be provided to all staff on a yearly basis. Staff who are directly responsible for students with life-threatening allergies or are expected to administer epinephrine will be provided a more in depth training in prevention of and response to exposure to known allergens. The school nurse will maintain a record of staff members who have been trained in epinephrine administration. The school nurse and administrator may delegate additional staff within the school to provide administration of epinephrine in the absence of the school nurse.

Each classroom with students having life-threatening food allergies will maintain information about the allergy. A visual of signs of an anaphylactic reaction will be accessible to classroom staff. Information regarding the student and his or her specific allergy will be provided to substitute teachers within the classroom. All staff within the classroom are to be aware of the allergies within the classroom.

#### *Food Service*

Waterbury/Duxbury's Food Service Program provides only peanut and tree-nut free foods in their breakfast and lunch menu items. Food service staff will be trained in the administration of epinephrine by the school nurse.

Within the cafeteria, there is a designated "nut-aware" table. Students with known life-threatening allergies to peanuts or tree nuts eat at this table. They are invited to request friends who are having school provided lunch to eat with them at this designated "nut-aware" table. Staff will make every reasonable attempt to prevent sharing of food in the cafeteria. Tables within the cafeteria are cleaned according to Food Service procedures to prevent cross contamination.

## *Classroom*

Within the classroom, every reasonable attempt will be made to adhere to the following guidelines in an effort to minimize exposure to the known allergen:

- Classrooms with students having life-threatening food allergies will be “nut aware.”
- Parents will be notified annually if their child is in a “nut aware” classroom.
- There will be a designated “nut aware” table in the classroom where the student regularly eats their snack.
- Staff will encourage students to wash their hands before and after handling or consuming food.
- Tables will be wiped down following meal times.
- Staff will make every reasonable attempt to avoid the use of identified allergens in classroom projects.
- Staff will encourage and support parents of students in classrooms with other students with known allergies to provide snacks for daily consumption, classroom celebrations and events that are nut free.
- Staff will make every reasonable attempt to prevent sharing of food within the classroom.

## **Exposure Management**

Each student with a known life-threatening allergy will have an Emergency Care Plan (ECP) on file at school which is updated yearly. The school nurse will work directly with parents and health care providers to ensure that the ECP is in place. The ECP will be provided to staff in the school who work directly with the student. The ECP will include:

- A photo of the child
- Information about the food allergen, including a confirmed written diagnosis from the child’s doctor or allergist.
- Information about signs and symptoms of the child’s possible reactions to known allergens.
- A treatment plan for responding to a food allergy reaction or emergency, including whether an epinephrine auto-injector should be used.
- Contact information for parents and doctors, including alternate phone numbers for notification in case of emergency.

## **Emergency Response**

Staff will contact the school nurse or office staff if an allergic reaction is suspected and initiate the ECP. A student should **ONLY** come to the office with an adult. The nurse can respond to the classroom and the student’s ECP will be followed as written.

For each student with a life-threatening allergy, the prescribed epinephrine and/or other medication will be kept in the health office labeled with the student’s name and ECP. As a courtesy to the family, the nurse will remind parents when the medication is due to expire. When a student with a known life-threatening food allergy leaves the school, their epinephrine and ECP will travel with an adult who has been trained and delegated to use epinephrine in case of an emergency.

If a suspected anaphylactic reaction occurs and epinephrine is used, staff must contact 911 immediately for Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The time of the epinephrine administration should be communicated to EMS and documented directly on the epinephrine injector. Staff will contact the student’s family and direct them to where the student is to be transported.

In the case of a student or staff member with anaphylaxis with unknown hypersensitivity, stock epinephrine will be available according to 16 V.S.A. § 1388. The school nurse shall communicate with a local physician yearly to obtain a standing order for epinephrine auto injector for a first time life-threatening allergic reaction, obtain the prescribed medication and be responsible for monitoring for expiration.

Following administration of epinephrine and contacting EMS, documentation of the incident is critical. Staff members involved in the incident will work with the school nurse to complete an anaphylaxis incident report. The school nurse and administrator will assess the incident and make every reasonable effort to prevent future emergencies.

## **Additional Resources**

VT AOE [Managing Life-Threatening Allergic Conditions in Schools](#) and [Act 68 AOE](#)

National School Board Association (NSBA) [Safe at School and Ready to Learn](#)

CDC [Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies In Schools](#)

National Association of School Nurses Resource Links [Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis](#)

VDH [Allergy Management](#)



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Agency of Education

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## State Board Policies on Epinephrine Auto-injectors as Required in Act 68 of 2013

Act 68 of 2013, an Act Relating to Health and Schools, requires the State Board, in consultation with the Department of Health, to “adopt policies for managing students with life-threatening allergies and other individuals with life-threatening allergies who may be present at a school.” The complete language can be found starting on Page 10 of Act 68 here: <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/DOCS/2014/ACTS/ACT068.PDF>.

**Summary:** Among other student and school health-related legislation, this Act allows a health care professional to prescribe an epinephrine auto-injector in a school’s name for storage and use at the school, authorizes schools to maintain a stock supply of epinephrine auto-injectors, and enables a school administrator to designate school nurses and other trained school personnel who may administer epinephrine at school to any student or other person, regardless of whether the student or person has a prescription for epinephrine<sup>1</sup>.

The act requires the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Department of Health, to adopt policies for managing students and other persons present at schools who have life-threatening allergies. The policies must establish protocols to prevent exposure to allergens in schools, and establish procedures for responding to life-threatening allergic reactions in schools.

In 2006, related legislation was passed that led to the creation of resources related to life-threatening allergic reactions to be available to schools. Those resources can be found at: [http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_health\\_services.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_health_services.html), and will be updated with this new information.

In addition to the existing provisions for students with known allergies, the Act states these policies must: “(4) require education and training for school nurses and designated personnel, including training related to storing and administering an epinephrine auto-injector and recognizing and responding to a life-threatening allergic reaction; and (5) require each school to make publicly available protocols and

procedures developed in accordance with the policies adopted by the State Board under this section.”

The cost implications for schools are largely in staff time. School nurses will use the same training materials recommended in the documents currently available through the Vermont Department of Health, Vermont Agency of Education, and the Center for Disease Control. Training for the staff will take time from school nurses and for teachers. It is recommended by the Vermont Department of Health that schools create an Allergy Management Team and should additionally provide a staff training response drill, both of which require staff time.

Schools have the option of maintaining a supply of epinephrine auto-injectors. The legislation states that a “school may maintain a stock supply of epinephrine auto-injectors...A school may enter into arrangements with epinephrine auto-injector manufacturers or suppliers to acquire epinephrine auto-injectors for free or at reduced or fair market prices.”

**State Board Policy Statement:**

It is the policy of the Vermont State Board of Education that life-threatening allergies be managed in accordance with procedures and protocols created jointly with the Vermont Department of Health, with consideration of the practices in the previously developed *Managing Life-threatening Allergic Conditions in Schools* manual published by the Agency of Education.

In addition, it is the policy of the State Board that, in accordance with Act 68 of 2013, schools must implement a process for schools and the parents or guardians of students with a life-threatening allergy to jointly develop a written individualized allergy management plan of action that:

1. incorporates instructions from a student’s physician regarding the student’s life-threatening allergy and prescribed treatment;
2. includes the requirements of section 1387 of this title, if a student is authorized to possess and self-administer emergency medication at school;
3. becomes part of the student’s health records maintained by the school;
4. is updated each school year;
5. requires education and training for school nurses and designated personnel, including training related to storing and administering an epinephrine auto-injector and recognizing and responding to a life-threatening allergic reaction; and
6. makes publicly available protocols and procedures developed in accordance with the policies adopted by the State Board, on the school’s health services website and/or in the student handbook.

The following policies and protocols are available for administrators, school nurses and other school personnel who may be responsible for handling a life-threatening allergic reaction. The Standards of Practice: School Health Services manual will be updated to reflect changes. Schools will use these materials to determine their protocol and publish them in school-based handbooks as appropriate.

1. **Legal & Technical Resources Related to Life-Threatening Chronic Allergies and Illnesses in Schools.** As required in Act 158 of 2006, this table of resources is available on the Agency of Education Website at: <http://education.vermont.gov/school-health-services>
2. **Managing Life-threatening Allergic Conditions in Schools.** This manual provides school personnel with detailed information about life-threatening allergies and best practices for schools, students and families. A model policy template is also included. This manual is available on the Agency of Education Website at: <http://education.vermont.gov/school-health-services>
3. **Collection of Epinephrine-specific Resources from the Vermont Department of Health.** These policies and protocols are available on the Agency of Education Website at: <http://education.vermont.gov/school-health-services>

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if the nurse or designated personnel believe in good faith that the student or individual is experiencing anaphylaxis, regardless of whether the student or individual has a prescription for an epinephrine auto-injector. (See Act 68 of 2013, (b)(1)(d)(3), *Page 10*)