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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION INQUIRY
PROFICIENCY-BASED LEARNING

ACT 77, PROFICIENCY-BASED LEARNING, PROFICIENCY-BASED REPORTING

By way of brief introduction, Act 77, proficiency-based learning, and proficiency-based reporting are related, but they are in fact distinctly different. Act 77 of 2013, is an act related to encouraging flexible pathways to secondary school completion. Key attributes of the law include flexible pathways, personalization, work-based learning, dual enrollment, virtual and blended learning, and early college. Act 77 sought to support a system of public education designed to ensure that every graduate is ready for college, career and civic life, and to promote opportunities for Vermont students to achieve postsecondary readiness through high-quality educational experiences that acknowledge individual goals, learning styles, and abilities. (Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. chapter 23, subchapter 2)

Proficiency-based learning (PBL) is a means to that end. "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. (Vermont State Board of Education Rules Series 2000 – Education Quality Standards, 2114 Definitions) PBL is intended to provide clarity to the questions: “What will students learn?” and “How will we know that they have learned it?” The Education Quality Standards (EQS) identify the seven content areas in which students must be able to demonstrate proficiency, and leaves it to each school district to determine how they will engage students in rigorous, relevant and comprehensive learning opportunities to meet those standards and demonstrate those proficiencies.

Proficiency-based reporting (PBR) systems require clear expectations for what will be learned; a shared understanding of the depth of learning necessary to demonstrate proficiency; strategies for documenting and reporting learning over time; a transparent method of communicating with learners, parents, and guardians where learners are along a continuum; and

opportunities, when necessary, for learners to retake assessments in order to progress towards proficiency. (*What is Proficiency Based Learning?*, Vermont AOE, May 9, 2017). In short, PBR attempts to answer the second question, “How we will know that students have learned it?”

While Act 77, PBL and PBR are distinct concepts, we see reference to each in the State Board of Education Rule Series 2000, Education Quality Standards (EQS), adopted in 2014. These rules describe what a high-quality education should look like for students attending Vermont’s public schools, and seek to ensure that all students in Vermont public schools are afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality, to enable them to achieve or exceed these standards. EQS is where we first see mention of the proficiency based graduation requirements (PBGR). “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. 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.” (Vermont State Board of Education Rules Series 2000 – Education Quality Standards, 2120.7. Graduation Requirements)

As Vermont embarked on fulfilling the promise of Act 77, there was movement towards a proficiency-based system of education, with the following vision and understanding: in a proficiency-based system there are clear expectations for learning (EQS 2120.5- Curriculum Content); student progress is measured and supported (EQS 2123.2- Local Assessment Systems); learning opportunities include flexible pathways to proficiency-based graduation requirements (EQS 2120.2 + 2120.4- Flexible Pathways + PLPs and Act 77). (*What is Proficiency Based Learning?*, Vermont AOE, May 9, 2017)

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT NOW?

This matters now because our first graduating class is about to test these theories. Are Vermont students ready for college, career, and civic duty? Was their educational experience personalized and relevant, and did they have voice and agency in it? Did they know themselves, set their goals, know their options and opportunities? Do they know how to learn when it is hard,

and how to learn from failure, as well as successes, and do they know how to find their resources and ask for help? Did they feel connected in their experiences and could they make sense of the “why” of the work? Do they feel prepared for the next stages of their lives? As we approach graduation 2020, the date by which it is expected that students will realize the benefits of their personalized learning, be able to demonstrate their proficiency in state and local standards, and meet their graduation requirements in a way that recognizes those proficiencies, we appreciate and learn from the successes and challenge of this journey for students, staff and administrators.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION INQUIRY, January 21, 2pm-8:00pm, Rutland High School

Pursuant to Title 16, Chapter 3, the State Board of Education, acting in our role to evaluate education policy, and engage with local school board members, recognized the value in convening interested parties around timely educational topics. To help inform our thinking and planning, Chair John Carroll inquired with the House and Senate Education Committees chairs, Webb and Baruth, to better understand what conversations would be most beneficial to the legislature this session. Independently, both acknowledged the interest around proficiency based learning/reporting. On Tuesday, January 21, from 2pm to 8pm, at Rutland High School, the State Board of Education convened students, parents, teachers, principals, curriculum coordinators, instructional coaches, board members, education industry leaders, representatives from the Agency of Education, and other interested visitors. We heard testimony from 34 individuals, including those who were scheduled, as well those who joined us for the “Public to be Heard” section of the program. We met in Rutland, listened intently, and shared dinner with those who were present.

Here are the themes that we heard (full notes from the meeting are in the Appendix):

1. There is general appreciation for the personalization of learning that has been driven by Act 77;
 - a. “Relevance and personalization in learning can have a positive impact on all learners”; “this is a matter of equity”
2. There is general appreciation among students and teachers for the clarity of proficiency-based learning and its opportunity to promote equity for learners

- a. Greater collaboration among teachers, promotes greater equity for students; “New teachers start with proficiencies that are agreed upon” and “there is increased clarity around what matters most for learners”
 - b. There is appreciation for the personal connection and “knowing” of the student that comes with proficiency based learning and personalized learning.
 - c. There is appreciation among students and educators for the “greater and deeper dialogue around learning content and transferable skills”; continuous feedback for students throughout the process improves learning and teaching
 - d. There was an assertion that the stress and anxiety of our students benefits from the opportunity to relearn the material and demonstrate proficiency; and another assertion that the stress and anxiety of our students stems from too many choices and opportunities.
3. There are challenges and conflicting opinions in assessing proficiency and reporting of that achievement (PBR)
 - a. There is concern for impact on transcripts and college admissions
 - b. There is concern for “decaying average” (last grade most important) and the impact on student motivation and accuracy of reflection of student proficiency; unintended consequences
 - c. There is concern regarding rigor; what if students are proficient at the beginning of the term? Continuous improvement/growth? “Is there enough mental sweat under PBL?”
 - d. There is concern regarding inconsistent use of retakes; “STANDARDS NEED STANDARDS,” says a student
 - e. There is concern regarding habits of work (e.g., no hard deadlines, preparedness for deadlines in college, work, military, life)
 4. These are not new issues. “There has long been discrepancy on evaluation of proficiency on standards in grading whether 1-100, or 1-4, or 1-74.”

- a. There is appreciation for the opportunity to pause and question assumptions about learning and grading
 - b. “PBL/PBR is forcing us to pull back the curtain on current and historical practices”
5. PBL can grow and thrive, while schools determine how to best communicate the outcomes for their students through proficiencies, “grades”, report cards, transcripts, etc.
- a. these are not mutually exclusive, hybrid models are being used in some schools and that is working for those communities
 - b. There needs to be more consistency in the implementation of PBL/PBR, at least regionally.
 - c. “Transcripts and school profiles need to tell the story clearly”
6. Change takes time.
- a. This is an iterative process and there have been many initiatives in education distracting/challenging implementation of these PBL/PBR/PBGR.
 - b. Implement change based on what communities can tolerate
 - c. There needs to be support to share the successes from districts who have been leaders in PBL. “We don’t need to reinvent the wheel”
7. There is a desire for evidence that PBL/PBR is working? Is there causal data to indicate success or failure?

CONCLUSION

The State Board of Education is grateful for all those who took the time out of their schedules to join us to testify, to witness the conversation and to share a meal. While the sampling is not scientifically representative of all Vermonters, it is none-the-less critical to all of our thinking as we imagine the future of education for our students. And as all good conversations do, this one left us with more questions:

1. What does the evidence say about the efficacy of PBL (in Vermont/Nationally)? Does it improve learning? By what measures?
2. How is PBL impacting equity of opportunity for all learners? What has been the impact on learners who were not well served in the traditional system?
3. Key advantages and disadvantages of PBL/PBR?
4. Does this work best for all grade levels and for all subjects areas?
5. What is the cost to districts? Who pays? More unfunded mandates?
6. Does this lend itself to statewide curriculum/standards/graduation requirements/transcripts? What is the grain size? What is the state’s role?
7. Where is Vermont on implementation across the state?
 - a. Who has been successful? How? Shared best practice? And how to share authentically and efficiently?

We would recommend that before any changes to the current law (Act 77) or rules (Education Quality Standards) are considered, a study committee be charged to assess the current status of implementation of Proficiency Based Learning/Reporting/Graduation Requirements, study the evidence statewide and nationwide, and offer recommendations for future actions to “standardize the standards”, so that we are assessing the authentic learning and preparedness of Vermont students in a consistent equitable manner that can be understood and appreciated by all (students, teachers, parents, colleges, employers, all).

So back to our initial questions: Are Vermont students ready for college, career and civic duty? Was their educational experience personalized and relevant? Do they know how to learn when it is hard? Did they feel connected in their experiences and could they make sense of the “why” of the work? Do they feel prepared for the next stages of their lives? Arguably, all of this matters equally as much as the content knowledge and may inform our students’ futures in far greater ways. Inspired, motivated, prepared, life-long learners and citizens. This is what we hope for Vermont students of all ages.

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**Vermont State Board of Education
Inquiry RE: Proficiency-Based Learning**

21 January 2020

Location: Rutland High School

Board Members:

Chair: John Carroll (JC)

Sabina Brochu (SB), Kyle Courtois (KC), Kim Gleason (KG), Kathy LaVoie-absent (KL), William Mathis (WM), John O’Keefe (JO), Jenna O’Farrell (JO), Oliver Olson-absent (OO), Peter Peltz (PP)

Secretary, Agency of Education: Dan French (DF)

<p>2:25pm</p>	<p>Afternoon session begins: Welcome and Introductions: John Carroll (JC) Recommended 2/3rds time for comments, 1/3rd for questions. JC noted that they don’t need to hear as much about qualifications, focus on what you want us to learn from you.</p>
<p>John Downes, Director of Tarrant Institute</p>	<p>11 colleagues, last 5 or 6 years--since ACT 77, have worked with 50 schools, improving schools generally but focus on ACT 77. Mostly secondary schools</p> <p>Anecdote: Asked students to interview a community member, students went out to the field to interview people that they admired, interviewed that person, didn’t receive credit for the video, did he ever have the chance to make the connection between his daily life and his academic life?</p> <p>Can we close the gap between what is taught in secondary schools and what is needed in post-grad life?</p> <p>Strong identified need for high schools in particular to know their students better. To give them flexible pathways for them. To develop a formative system that informs that learning. ACT 77 tried to lay that out. It was in conjunction with EQS.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowing students well 2. Engaging opportunities 3. Assessment to support that learning (task neutral criteria, portfolios, multiple chances, students ownership, emphasis on reflection) <p>These are not new ideas, but fill gaps. We might need new systems to make them work and that might mean replacing old systems</p> <p>Implementation issues are when the three pillars are not done with one another. Students have rebelled against PLPS unless they can find it meaningful, and rejected goal setting unless it is about something bigger and better</p>

	<p>If you take out one piece, it falls apart. If we are taking equity seriously, we need to know students well, engaging, and assessments that support learning. Challenges--implementation takes years, sustaining over a long period of time, we can expect a J curve, we will struggle in some implementation. When we are hearing concerns, that may be what is happening. It is time to learn to do these practices well and leverage content to its fullest. PBA isn't meant to solve everything. We have other tools. What are the gaps that we are trying to fill? We were worried about low post-secondary participation, this is helping to fill gaps. Needs intensive and consistent professional learning, collective efficacy, needing to see progress along the time. We can intensify the implementation of these practices, equity would be well served by it.</p> <p>(WM) You talked about proficiencies but also personalized learning, how can you meld the two?-</p> <p>Personalized learning means passion based interest, deeper learning, not plugging students into computers. Truly personalized learning means not relying on traditional tests, proficiency based assessment supports personalization because it is task neutral, can be evaluated whether on a farm or zoological or lab, same rubric--same expectations. We need that if we are going to go across SES, racial spectrum and more.</p> <p>JC-What the gaps in assessment and how do we fill those gaps?</p> <p>We are well on our way to that if we take on a comprehensive assessment scheme. Standardized are part of that, PBA may be good at whether or not students are getting a deep experience, to apply knowledge, we need that assessment tool to do that.</p> <p>JO-How would respond to the criticism that Proficiency based grading leaves too much of a gap between students, and give more feedback?</p> <p>We are trying to do something beyond replacing the old grading system. I think its reasonable to come up with something like a portfolio to assess against proficiencies would be better served. It needs to be a part of a comprehensive assessment scheme.</p>
<p>David Ruff - Executive Director of Great Schools Partnership</p>	<p>GSP is a nonprofit in Portland, Maine. Work primarily in NE but also around the country. Envision rigorous system to support college, work, citizenship. Not one particular pathway. There is an importance in citizenship. It is about having <i>good</i> people, not just smart people. We believe in educational equity. Raise marginalized voices and challenge imbalance of power. PBL is a part of an equity agenda. 25 members from Vermont. Can't give specific examples from VT but from a broader perspective. Proficiency is across the country - Excellent Ed Policy Ed found that proficiency-based is allowed everywhere but Wyoming. Aurora Institute keeps an updated listing on progress on competency. Every state has the ability to support some level of Proficiency-Based Learning.</p>

	<p>Interested in some of the questions that they asked. It is not right to just see it as Proficiency work but personalized learning work. Proficiency is what we want our students to know and do and setting up the way to show that students can do it. Does not require students to take ownership of their learning. You need to combine the two elements - multiple pathways and clearly defined proficiencies.</p> <p>I want to spend most of my time on six key lessons that we have learned:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Limit the number of standards required for graduation. Make a note that there are a lot of standards that are needed to develop the curriculum. There is a smaller subset of what we are actually going to assess on. What are we going to hold kids accountable for? If you hold kids accountable for all of the standards, you get a checklist mentality. What is your level of accountability? Limit the number of graduation proficiencies for students. 2) You need to personalize but need to be cautious about isolation. Collaboration is crucial. In some cases, schools have moved to an isolated setting. Online learning - there are some uses but I would not support an entirely online program. Moves away from deeper learning. 3) Transferable skills matter and are extremely important for students and teachers. Getting to that idea of getting kids to think about these skills - what employers and colleges want. 4) Students should be required to learn beyond the competencies. Students should be able to say what other things they want to engage in. 5) We need to make sure that there is space for that to happen. Teachers need space, time, and consistency. The biggest fault in systems-level change is not holding on to the change. Not giving enough time for implementation. 6) College Admissions - It is not the problem that the public think it is. Website shows colleges that don't have a problem with proficiency transcripts. NCAA is a little bit of a sticking point, eligibility. Look at core courses and add to quality points. Not a problem with proficiency. Need to go on the NCAA website and explain the grading system. Scholarships - Tricky. There are so many of them that are local. If schools go to the scholarship programs. What are you trying to understand? School translates how to read the transcript. Grading - A communication device. Here is how students are doing? What is your student learning? Are we okay with where they are? Traditional grading only does the second. We have schools 0-100, A-F, 1-4, and narrative--it call all be proficiency, what's important is to explain what you are doing. <p>Questions:</p> <p>Kyle - During the previous presentation, 'authentic work' term and how it is going to be assessed over time. What I hear is PLPs are the method for that. What is the goal for transcript moving forward?</p>
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	<p>Ex. If we want all kids to read well, what does well mean? To assess, we need to define what 'well' means? Content neutral allows for multiple ways to demonstrate how you achieve the standard. Doesn't compromise on equity. Reality is that there are no uniform transcripts now. Dictating what local school systems should have for a transcript would be problematic. In most instances people want to see a course grade and how did you do in the standards? Simply having the courses can hide the standards, having a combination is most successful.</p> <p>Peter - Carnegie Units - how are we doing on that? New England Secondary School Consortium - Young males are disengaged and how are we doing?</p> <p>Carnegie Units are based on seat time (not credits). Most places doing this well are still using credit systems. Not time to time-based system. Tied to the learning standards that the courses are trying to achieve. Collect NE data - graduation rates, college enrollment, college persistence, college completion. Disaggregate that data. The good news is the gap between male and females is narrowing.</p> <p>SB - There should be a limited number of standards for graduation. We are not going to have a perfect system. Creating fewer standards, would that make them less prepared because there are fewer requirements?</p> <p>We need to be clear about the non-negotiables.</p>
<p>Teacher Panel: Rachel Duffy, Kate Toland, Chris Whalen, Jonah Ibson</p>	<p>KT: Thank you for having me, nice work in giving us proficiency expectations for us today (speak clearly, etc), I'm from Peoples Academy, Social Studies teacher, enthusiasm for it, and fully support it. We are just getting our feet wet. Three big shifts in my practices: Student demonstrations of desired outcomes: fact is that we actually have proficiencies in disciplines now, didn't have it when we started. Clarity in our department, are able to start with instruction from what matters most, conversation with colleagues are richer, we think about how we can get better at teaching (rhetorical devices example), story of latest learning scale from teacher from a different school, that's more efficient. In terms of equity, instruction is focused and clarity increases equity. Teachers are skilled in knowing what a scale is like, students are new to it with--teacher can spot thinking faster that increases equity. Cognitive complexity is increased--needs to go with ACT 77, so that you can know your learners really well so that they can demonstrate their learning in a personalized manner.</p> <p>RD: Also at Peoples: Pluses: Clarity in our disciplines, skills, and at the classroom level--the target. Report on proficiencies it is more clear about what we are reporting on, not just a number or letter grade. She loves that students get a chance for feedback to work with teachers one on one, we have that built</p>

	<p>into our day and improve proficiency level.</p> <p>Equity - students are not burdened by averages.</p> <p>Places to improve - still translate proficiencies to grades in the end, feels like that limits. That is the end point for some people, what is the final grade? Students and parents are still focused on that. I would like us to work on having those proficiencies shown across disciplines. Too many silos and want to extend to the tech center. Proficiencies are not a part of the language always, same with early college. Parents expect students to graduate in four years. We need to move away from having students expected to complete in four years. Some come in behind on proficiencies. We have to stick with this despite frustrations -- there is a long way to go.</p> <p>Jl - english teacher at Harwood. Speaking from the perspective of someone who has spent a lot of time thinking about implementing this. I believe this is both radical and long-overdo, in the best interest of students. Three noticings. PBL compels teachers to see their role in a new way. Teachers can't see themselves as disseminators of information. Now are facilitators of learning. Start by identifying core skills. Proficiencies are open for any teachers to teach and assess. Identify the content that is most relevant and engaging. Design ways to demonstrate mastery. Becomes our role to give clear and targeted feedback. Seen real growth and progress in the learning of my students. Student was in the classroom for an extended learning opportunity. Student was working on revising an essay on Animal Farm and picked a quote. Knew that it was a great piece of evidence to support the claim. Knew how to ask for help, rather than 'how to get an A'. Requires teamwork amongst educators.</p> <p>CW- English teacher at Harwood HS. Story about a former super in his district. He has been there 28 yrs. Bob M. was the super, he liked to see mental sweat on the mind of students. He wanted students to be doing the hard work of learning. Not sure he is seeing that in proficiency based learning. Sees teachers doing a lot of work. Some students are more focused on formative or summative. When they hear something is formative, they take it less seriously, because there is no consequence. I think a grade needs to be closely linked to their work. When the proficiencies are too complex--like in our report card, it loses some of its urgency. I love the theory and some of it is important to consider, but good teachers always got to know their students and were clear. Proficiencies might complicate things more and will leave it there.</p> <p>SB: Asked a question about why a student should try at the start of a class when I can retry later</p> <p>CW-Agrees and sees this often. Not enough work at the beginning, leaving things open so often may be part of a rise in anxiety</p> <p>KT-The art of design is making sure that this doesn't happen. The benefit is that I</p>
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	<p>started with the proficiencies in a course...what happens everyday is about wanting to get the work done and working together about something they care about. Point well taken, Peoples created a deadline and due date policy to help with issues of not caring early enough, leaves room for professional discretion, and engagement in the course throughout the time-we want to create environments where people want to show up with their best work. That is a challenge</p> <p>JI-It depends on the system that your school has implemented. Our first year, we used the jumprope platform. We choose a calculation method, we choose power-law, it is a growth model, the unintended consequences of that calculation had to be changed--mid-year, because students were gaming the system, students can do that for anything. Separate PBL from PBA, linked but not the same, questions about averages</p> <p>SB-Most recent grade is what counts</p> <p>JI-that's difficult</p> <p>RD-It wasn't as bad as I thought, but the use of the deadline policy has helped a lot for that issue. Students that meet the due dates will get my time and so will those that don't, but not as much. We use professional judgement at the end, not a calculation.</p>
<p>VT High School Students</p>	<p>Montpelier Student, Hope: Senior at Montpelier HS. Who am I as a student? How have I done at a school with PBL? I have thrived. More engaged. Been in a wide-range of school systems. PBL is all that I have known in HS. It would be useful to know that I am low income, which means that I really rely on the infrastructure that is available, achievement gap. Regardless of what is going on at home, I can get it through the school. Took a number of AP classes. Two dual enrollment classes. Pursued independent studies, scheduling conflicts or when things are not offered. Community-based learning opportunities are great. Chemistry internship. Bus fare would have been about \$400, but the program was able to fund that. Involved in student council and advocacy. Pursuing what I enjoy. I can exercise that at my school. Performing well on standardized classes and accepted to Columbia University. Academically motivated student, system where I have thrived. Each marking period we have a learning expectation, transferable skills and content standard. Able to think of what we are learning on a comprehensive level. Can succeed in the summative system by analyzing what I have learned from those outlined standards. Formative assessments help me to prepare for summative assessments. System allows me to work towards transferable skills that will prepare me for life after HS.</p> <p>Rutland Student 1, Susanna: Does the system allow you to learn more? I believe that it does boost what you can learn. Flex time is valuable, retakes are valuable. This is important to achieve the learning that we are going for. Teachers give us a rubric, and then we can know how to achieve a 3 or 4. I believe it does achieve</p>

	<p>equity, it gives students access to all the standards, grading may be the issue, students at Rutland have the following concerns: college admissions are a big concern, standards based learning--mixed feelings. Some admissions offices asked for proficiency based scale to go along with materials, a big concern is habits of works grades are separate from content achievement, some students could be doing well in the content but not in habits of work grade is low, doesn't reflect in their academic grade, I know that many colleges, self-reported grades might not reflect habits of work, the transcript needs to have that on there too, to represent the student more clearly. It is a motivation issue for some students, I don't think they should be averaged equally, they should count for something, late work should be accounted for in the grading system, thanks for letting us speak.</p> <p>Rutland Student 2, Trevor: Positives - The ability to retake tests, that helps both ends of the spectrum. Helps if you had a bad day. Minimizes stress. Retakes can help students that struggle with material and gives teachers opportunities to support those students. Rubrics - a more objective way of how they are going to be assessed. More flexible opportunities - Early college, flex block period, 45 minutes in the day to go see anyone that they want, teachers can schedule students to that flex block. A lot less peer-to-peer competition, more collaboration. Areas of improvement: Greater codification of standards-based grading. Standards based grading needs standards. Parents did not grow up with this. Within schools, policies differ. System is more confusing. Important moving forward that we abandon the one-foot-in-one-foot-out. Dedicate ourselves to this new system, stop preserving the old. All assignments should have the opportunity to exceed expectations. Transparency is important for everyone. Oversight function. Dialogue is important when implementing a new system. Today is an example of that. Having conversations about PBL and grading. Having conversations on the ground with teachers, parents, and students. Build trust and lead to conversations.</p> <p>JO-Do some students struggle with the lack of competition in the system? Might that be better for some students? How do students handle that here?</p> <p>Trevor: Here at Rutland, we can get more feedback based on .5 increments, we also have GPA at the end of the semester, so that is still there. I think that people are starting to realize that times are changing maybe--education is more of a collaborative effort maybe, not just who is the best who is the smartest, so many different ways to be smart, the students want to support each other.</p> <p>Hope: My school uses from 0-4, I think that I catch myself comparing, but we are trying to be more intrinsic motivated, stop myself that what actually matters is not what other people are doing, but wherever I am , can I improve my learning. Its not about motivation being super connected to grading, but more about how students can intrinsically motivated.</p> <p>JO-Question about middle school and proficiency</p>
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	<p>Hope-Not sure, only one year there. For me, probably cultural and social adjustment, making sure middle schools are thriving, that will help if MS is implemented well too. Teachers need to know what they are doing, that's what is important.</p> <p>Peter: As a collaborative process--how much does your voice impact teaching and learning together, is that better or more appealing?</p> <p>Trevor: I've seen teachers connect that assessments aren't on the same day. Not sure if that PBL, or just teachers mindset changing. More questions from teachers about learning in the process.</p> <p>Susanna: Teacher will slow down if a topic or standard isn't going well, or speed up. That is also helpful.</p> <p>Hope: Strong student voice in my school. PLPs had the chance to talk about goals and that felt more authentic and useful. Member on local school board.</p> <p>SB: Not motivated in one of my classes, I still can get a 4. I didn't prepare much and got a 4. Friends who put in a lot of time, but they got 3s on it. How can effort show up better and reflected in that way?</p> <p>Trevor--That is a problem in traditional grading too, can habits of work be in the overall grade? Could effort be represented more in overall grade.</p>
<p>Superintendent</p>	<p>Unavailable today unexpectedly</p>
<p>Public Comment</p>	<p>4 minutes each:</p> <p>Helen Beattie - Prior school psychologist, was founder and director of UP for Learning, lynchpin to close the achievement gap and promote equity. The one point that I want to make is the disconnect between the traditional grading system and how incongruent it is with the neuroscience of learning. I saw so many students damaged by learning. Grading system is inherently flawed. Teachers move on whether you are ready or not in the previous system. It hurts those students who struggle the most. SEL takes a hit when seeing a system that labels them as deficient. In the traditional system students can get in a cycle of failure and never get out. The prior system perpetuated the achievement gap. We know that when young people feel ownership of their learning, embrace failure, intrinsic motivation, skills and capacity, space to demonstrate true potential.</p> <p>10th grader at Lamoille: Start by saying--in theory, PBL incredibly useful, but the way they have been implemented have negated their positive effects. Their</p>

	<p>potential has been the issue. Each school should be able to interpret, but there should be guidance so that each school can see their full potential. Each school needs more guidance. I also think that students should be as involved as anyone else. It is done to students rather than with students. Should have an equal seat at the table, student feedback should be sought more than it is.</p> <p>John Pellitier: Father of 3, Stowe School District--the board has been told of the research that benefits PBL, "WRONG" book reference, experts often turn out to be wrong. Replication crisis, less than 1% of all education research is ever subject to replication. So confidently making radical educational reforms based on research is dangerous:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Is Vermont still the leader in PBL movement and is NH currently the only other state requiring PBGR. Vermont is the only state in the nation that is taking on a comprehensive (NH 2016, started in 98 and have falling scores, two other states eliminated after requiring Maine and Oregon) 2) Has the AOE ever showed data that is hurting scores? Nellie Mae study had 10 high schools in Maine study with lower SAT scores, SBAC and NEAP scores down in Vermont since then. Vermont is the only state that has not released in 2019 for SBAC. 3) Noted that VTNEA has data of effort declining, content knowledge among students declining 4) PBL experts were wrong when they said PBL transcripts wouldn't hurt students, ask students in St. Albans and U-32. 5) Estimated that 168 million of dollars has been spent if you could teachers doing the work 6) What clearly defined metrics have we put in to measure the success of PBL and implementation of. <p>Ben Freeman - Citizen of Vermont, Parent, School Board Member, Former Educator, Coordinator of network of people in education. Equity, sustainability and joy. PBL is a transformative tool for how we reach and engage learners. Reimagining schools from industrial age to present day. Hears a lot about what is working and what is not working. Hears concerns about change. Students can speak more about the experience. Transition is difficult for everyone, but it is best practice. Transforms learning and must be done. PBL and Act 77 have allowed for remarkable transformation of schools. Cites examples of innovation under PBL. Visit them if you haven't. Quiet work is important as well. Proficiencies indicate what is important to learn for today. Building capacity for students to realize their full potential.</p> <p>Dan Cunningham - Parent of four children in the Burlington School District. Convuluted history. Dislike simmer below the headlines of U-32 and Maple Run. There is no argument that students should be proficient and essential goals of students. Sweeping grandiose initiatives. Did not allow for communities to experiment and did not align with the collegiate system. System was rolled out in</p>
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	<p>a euphoric frenzy. No one stopped to ask, is this where we should spend our resources. Opportunity costs matter. Vermont salaries depend on the idea. The sunk-cost fallacy shows that those engaged in a project will continue to argue for it no matter what evidence exists otherwise. We need to change direction. Commend Sec French, statement was based on facts. This hearing is not going to give you accurate testimony. Contains no skeptical parents. Don't ask the barber if you need the haircut. Silent constituents need to be heard - teachers have spoken about their dislike and confusion. Fear of retribution from their bosses. Need to allow for anonymous feedback without having to travel. Advocate for a method to do so.</p>
<p>Emily Rinkema, Stan Williams</p>	<p>Stan: Thanks for putting this together, we are going to speak to what we have heard so far. We have heard from lots of different perspectives today, different realities and each is true for that person. If I was in London at a bar right now and talking about football--things might get confused, we think language is a key issue. Use of the metaphor--opened up a GPS, gave us directions, we look at PBL as same as GPS</p> <p>"where do we want our learners to go", "how do we know where they are along the way?", "how do I respond to that?" "How do we communicate with people?"</p> <p>There are a lot of decisions that need to be made regarding communications.</p> <p>Emily: making a distinction between PBL and PBA, it's important to answer the two center questions and making sure we have the time to get those right to improve learning and equity, but most of the time the attention goes to the fourth question and the complexity for parents and communities is there and can overshadow the place where the learning can change. Share our reality--CVU 1400 student realities, many teachers, hard to sum up that reality. We know that because of PBL, we are much clearer on learning targets across middle schools, never happened before</p> <p>JC-not PBL though is it?</p> <p>Emily, It is.</p> <p>JC-having a hard time understanding why that couldn't be before?</p> <p>Emily-we could have, but this is more coming together to create those learning targets that brought the district together</p> <p>Stan-Scales are new and have never been defined before (those rubrics) that is a new part than just a curriculum map</p>

	<p>Emily-thinking a lot about actionable assessments, better assessments we can more help targeted. A lot of people have talked about rigor and work ethic. There could be a disconnect between formative and summative assessment. If a student can do nothing and then ace a summative then something is wrong in that class. Does that happen, yes--we have fallen down in places and its variable, that hasn't changed, we still have control over that rigor--we should be able to tell sooner if you are bored or if you are not working hard early on and do something about it. We hope (to Sabina) that in that class is not all of your classes and that it will get better.</p> <p>JO-If trying hard means success, is it always that way? I have a hard time with that, if you are mastering algebra, you should go to geometry, and thats good, not sure if that is happening. In my time, you got more worksheets, but you should get more challenges, reference to Rudy the movie for the fact we like students that work hard</p> <p>Stan-taught for 24 years now. Examples of students that have worked really hard, but have missed the mark--that was hard--they had worked really hard but way off, what now? That was when my teaching was too broad, now the target is clearer and hard work can be more focused and will get them there, will pay off. Wonderful thinkers--might not be great writers, trying to focus that energy and get towards a specific goal and maybe find skills that weren't there. Complexity versus difficulty, we can add more books, but adding complexity versus difficulty.</p> <p>Emily-Chris Walen mentioned mental sweat, in my own teaching experience, I see that more now. I see it with complexity not difficulty, it used to be four hours of homework--with a 50 question test about a novel--that was mental sweat but difficult at low level thinking, we want more mental sweat from students we know better, and be different for different students.</p> <p>JC-Can I ask about grading? It seems needless complex, what's the difference between A-D versus 1-4, what's the difference?</p> <p>Stan-The reality is that there is no way at any school. Got an email on my way here from my daughter, at CVU things are still combined into a letter grade. As we have been doing that, people are looking to alter and change, hopefully that hard work means better results, PBGR has exposed inconsistencies in grading, not creating them. Pulled back the curtain on something that we never talked about, it has exposed inconsistencies and shrink them.</p> <p>KG: in that marrying assessment and grading that looks more traditional, does that feel like sacrificing, why not do it?</p> <p>Emily--Good point--we have been struggling with that for years. We have so much better information than we used to, but squishing down into one grade, feels dirty--we start to lose the clarity when it is disaggregated...and yet-we decided to hold onto what is familiar, it was a compromise of the ideal, but</p>
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	<p>thought we could work on the practices while that was held onto to allow for the the other changes. Schools have done it differently, we have to look at what our communities will tolerate and then move on that.</p> <p>Peter: This grading seems to be the primary issue, can we adjust and customize so that it will out, how should we adress this part?</p> <p>Emily: In the state?</p> <p>Peter: No, in your district, I hope the state doesn't, hope it can be done at the local level</p> <p>Emily: We've been at it over a decade, significant shift, now community and teachers are asking, why use the conversion and letter grades? The push has to come within, not from the state.</p> <p>WM: We are doing a very pragmatic thing, but validity versus viability, something you just have to live with?</p> <p>KG: This is hard, are there sharing opportunities across the state?</p> <p>Stan: Thanks, we need to communicate and collaborate better and more intentionally. It is easy to get online and share the successes, but we need to dig-in and share the challenges, and strategies. There are enough wonderful things happening in schools all over the state, but knowing where and who those are and when to go, collectively we need to do a better job of not always looking inward, collaborating more in this work.</p> <p>SB: Met with student group at her school, one thing that stood out--the standards aren't based on the content, they are based on the skills, does that mean pleasing teacher and not having as much content value.</p> <p>Stan: Within our own faculty, we have that conversation of skills versus content. At our school the curriculum document 'Know, Understand, Do', you have to prove your ability to do a skill within the content that we are using. We have flexibility within the content to push. Can push based on interest within the agreed-upon content of the course. More opportunities for students to have say over the content that is covered. The simplest answer is that it has to happen within the content of that course.</p>
<p>Jess DeCarolis, Pat Fitzsimmons</p>	<p>Jess - Act 77 came from a decade of research and policy. In 2014, EQS were adopted to support Act 77. Flexible Pathways and PBL work together. Personal relationships, learner profiles, proficiencies, and flexible pathways together provide a really rich learning environment. Ground this in the practical application. If someone told me that the pilot had a 72, do I have the information I need to ensure that the pilot is going to land? What they learn in school sticks and can apply it. Characterized by transparency, sustained focus on student</p>

	<p>learning, application of learning to new contexts, maintaining high expectations.</p> <p>Pat - Educational systems are very complex, proficiency based learning is one part. Coordinated curriculum, education support teams, personalized learning, etc. It is an adaptive change rather than a technical change. Adaptive change requires new learning and requires systems to evolve. Reporting systems are on the mind of a lot parents and educators. That is a technical change. Attention in some parts of the state. Can be resolved with guidance from experts. Context really matters. What does grading communicate to students and their families? It is important that everyone understands change. Pat ran through some examples of transcripts. Cites Mastery Transcript Consortium. Why is it that with all of our changes in technology our transcripts still look the same?</p> <p>Jess - 49 states are engaged in this work at some level. Map of states progress can be shared. The work is difficult and there hasn't been a playbook. Many states that have used Innovation Zones, when Zones run out of funding, they bake in inequities.</p> <p>Pat - John talked about growth curves -- life cycle of innovation. You can't just sit on a growth curve, you have to jump to another growth curve to adjust to the times. We need to continually improve to meet the needs of the students.</p> <p>Jess - Why is PBL necessary? Necessary to prepare our students for the future. Our ability to predict change has changed. Need to engage in a greater level of independence of thought. Jobs that can be automated are no longer needed, proficiencies demonstrate how they can work in problem solving jobs. Need to be courageous.</p> <p>Pat - Worked with stakeholders across the state to develop a Vermont Portrait of a Graduate. Learner Agency, Global Citizenship, etc (see VT Portrait of a Graduate). This can provide a lens to revisit their grad requirements.</p> <p>Jess - There are ethical requirements. Data - In our 2018 data report, VT has the highest graduation rates across disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>JO - Couldn't it be that the data means that it is easier to graduate?</p> <p>Jess - Could look at college completion scores.</p> <p>JC - Should look at all the data.</p> <p>Jess - UC System is looking to eradicate the SAT system. Do we want to make decisions on incomplete data?</p> <p>PP- College dropout rate used to be really high. Still an issue?</p> <p>Jess - Across NE we need to work on college retention.</p>
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	<p>KG - The range of implementation leads me to wonder or hope that there should be some shared best practice, PD, systematizing of the learning that is happening. I am not sure what the role the AOE plays in that?</p> <p>Pat - Other the course of this year, we are providing four convenings on Local Comprehensive Assessments. Capitalizing on educators learning from educators.</p> <p>KG - How are people involved in this? How do other people benefit?</p> <p>Pat - Inviting leadership teams. Track who comes and tries to reach out to those systems that are underrepresented. CVEDC is involved so that messages can be similar.</p> <p>Sabina - You mentioned that there needs to be more innovation. We are given this PBL. More complex and time consuming. Still have the same types of classrooms. Teacher now has to provide more feedback to grade formatives. Is there a way to improve implementation support for teachers? It takes more time.</p> <p>Jess - Discusses how we can prepare better in teacher prep programs.</p> <p>Bill - Can you give data? Want to be careful about causality.</p> <p>Jess - Wendy Gellar is working on this.</p> <p>Pat - Collecting data from the field and would be happy to share.</p> <p>Jenna - Have you looked at the data about who is successful and the demographics? I wonder what the unevenness in implementation looks like.</p> <p>Jess - What are the essential attributes of successful systems? Hard to capture all of the support that the AOE provides. Done over 200 PD opportunities in my department alone. This is what we know is best practice. We are going to embrace best practices. Want no one to get left behind.</p>
<p>Curtis Heir, Michael Thomas, Adrienne Weld, Abby Brodowski</p>	<p>Abby: English teacher Rutland department chair, six years with proficiency based learning. We are achieving excellence with this excellence, meeting or exceeding SBAC scores, with challenging demographics, best instruction in Vermont and in New England (according to NEASC report), this is something that is never complete if we are doing this right. We will always be grappling with things, seriously caution against removing it and expecting better outcomes. Equity and Excellence: PLC structure, efficient and clarity for community, common planning time when possible makes the system function better, schools that don't have that will have a harder time. Working on common summative assessments, available for anyone to see at anytime, PLC are efficient when used correctly, and need to be collaborative. We have a robust MTSS, answers</p>

	<p>questions about equity. Every adult can use the system for every student, daily flex block, credit recovery, and more, personal note--100 freshman in the past years per year, can serve many students well. Averaging transferable skills is difficult, the gradebook is constantly updating, revising. We are publishing our curriculum for the public-transparency, engaging teachers, system allows for better learning for all students. Rutland can be used as a model, still hav things to work on, but it is years of transition, hope we can commit and invest, because like students, schools need consistent support and clear leadership.</p> <p>AW - Department Chair for PE. Helped growth as a teacher. Slow down and look at the content that I am teaching. When students are in my classroom. We are not looking at rules of the game. How do we develop healthy students? Applying life skills and goal-setting. The things that we use along the way are at kids fingertips. Applying goal-setting later in life. Skillset for after graduation on how to stay healthy. Traditional PE is about games. We are now focusing on personal health. Parents say that they wish they had learned what students are learning now in PE. Looking at the scales, students have the benefits have direct and healthy communications with teachers. Can talk to students about what they need. Looking at the ability to have the same ability to talk to parents. Created conversations with parents. We have to let students know their expectations and parents have this information as well. One of the other outcomes is that students have behavior and academic content. Less students fail. Not being held against them if the student is disadvantaged.</p> <p>CH- What we have here is a Bill Gates funded organization from Maine 501c3. We dance to their tune. When Great Schools Partnership got their start, they had the framework. Now the teachers are the experts. Teachers know how it goes in real life. VT-NEA survey results are cited. ,There appears to be no research that the PBL framework is effective, that a 1-4 grading scale is more useful, homework and achievement, our schools are preparing college, military and work, not having deadlines does not help students there are no deadlines, the GSP model does not motivate students because it doesn't have deadlines, but also because it is confusing, decaying, the grading is a convoluted problem, dense rubrics, nobody knows what 3 is, is it 83, 90, 98, we don't know, many students are content with that, many fads in schools come and go---like open classrooms, and then rooms came in, reading wars cited, this is the most destructively fad in my lifetime, a generation or more of students will have it destroyed--and for what, teachers still teach, its a square peg into a round hole, we can do this without the change in grading systems, we can have portfolios--curriculum mapping is needed to ensure no gaps, even if so how do we know which to use, the credit system works--the idea that credits know, it is not best-practice it is mal-practice. 1) demotivating, 2) practice is the same 3) its confusing</p> <p>MT: Working to summarize my judgements shared around the state. The basics are not controversial, the best teachers have always done: be clear, be flexible, be advocates of students. I'm an advocate, but I'm putting on my critic hat but</p>
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	<p>people can get upset. The tenor around the state, the challenge seems like it is nuts and bolts design choices is where most of the controversy lies, because if they are not made carefully they are high stakes, we need to speak to the flat part of J curve, there is anger out there, we need to embrace that head-on. Their isn't one version, and we are damaged when there is one that is held up. There is damage when someone holds up what is the real "PBL", another problem is when people transport one idea from one context to another, from one school to another, for any specific implementation there is limited research, the broad part is researched, but the small pieces are not researched. I've been appalled by some things are passed as best-practice in PBL, there is not one best approach, it needs context with the school. All PBL systems much find balance with competing interests: e.g. de-motivating students, masking fundamental needs in schools with scales instead of instruction and MTSS intervention, grade inflation is a risk, any serious schools should start with MTSS, but it can be after-thought, trading theoretical skills for content is a risk. It is a good system for getting students to graduate, not PBL, but certain schools</p> <p>Statewide needs:</p> <p>Schools need training, not in PBL but in leading change schools, must be long term, not sporadic, not experts, but time to work with colleagues, teachers need more time during the day to provide feedback and interventions, if we can't find extra time we are giving lip-service</p> <p>JC - Celebrates diversity of perspectives on panel.</p> <p>KG - Mr. Hier, how is it different to know what a 3 is on a rubric compared to an 82?</p> <p>Hier - Flattening out the scale is demotivating. Can happen on a 100- point scale. You have more opportunities to properly reward a student for their effort.</p> <p>MT - If one broad category is what you need, you are lumping a huge amount of variability into one school. Proficiency can span from college unready to college-ready.</p> <p>KG - With my kids, I was unsure what their grades meant. Standards seem to be more clear. Consistency seems to need to be applied.</p> <p>Hier - The 'decaying system' is confusing. If you do a retake, it may not move the needle at all on your grade. It is unfair. How would you like to be penalized for taking your SAT a second time? We are saying everything that you did before decays.</p> <p>JO- Are these retakes the same test of different tests?</p> <p>Depends.</p>
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	<p>JO - My kids call them specials. How was the transition compared to core subjects?</p> <p>AW - Class schedules are 8-week courses. We tend to be the test subjects. We went first. Bettered our responses to community members. We have more practice rolling out. Speaking for others, it is difficult for them to make transitions. They have more preparation requirements.</p> <p>JO - It sounds like there is more communication involved in PE now.</p> <p>AW - Yes, it is different now. It is a shock to some students. It helps to promote that teamwork and collaboration with parents. Students now have their parents on board with the changes. Students understand their expectations.</p> <p>WM - You said there is no research supporting this. One thing about collapsing the scale is that you collapse your variables. You said there wasn't any research. I would like to see strong empirical research that deals with the questions.</p> <p>MT - Thomas Guskey cites research that he misinterprets. He says that teachers cannot make accurate assessments based on more than four categories.</p> <p>WM-Was it peer reviewed?</p> <p>MT-Yes, that was</p> <p>SB: Habits of work, should it count towards overall grade, for all of you, do you see students being less motivated if they get a 3 do they stop compared to 100</p> <p>CH: I worry a lot about the demotivation, college is hard, the military is hard, work is hard--I worry about that for young people.</p>
<p>Jen Stainton</p>	<p>First years of her job was focused on implementation of PBL.</p> <p>Six points of proficiency I will speak through from my notes</p> <p>Proud to be from Vermont. AcT 77 and PBL together are powerful, those two are often apart, but here they are together. Our students should have voice and choice in the pathways, and schools should be very clear in their expectations. High schools on the move took a look at in Vermont and that began a process that led to EQS and ACT 77, the pride I had when talking with family in Denver, also working on this there with 92,000 students</p> <p>The Policy has actually entered into the core of instruction. We are positively impacting opportunities, relationships, focusing on outcomes in Woodstock Example: now have centers for internships, dual enrollment, early college, and new pathways all around. Work with students to gain</p>

	<p>proficiency and extend proficiency. Conversation has changed from points to can we talk about counterclaims based on your feedback you gave me.</p> <p>Positive piece is outcome. More data, we invested in STAR 360 for ELA and Math, put in hands of teachers and pair with formatives in classroom and work towards excellence.</p> <p>Implementation can be messy, equity can impacted as we work to implement. For us, communication was a major problem. A lot of communication happened ad-hoc and that was flaw of ours</p> <p>We had an issue with tracking proficiencies too, we heard from an expert in software industry--they are used to that, schools are not. We experieced that, we thought we were buying complete packages, but it was a cultural conflict between software and student grade tracking.</p> <p>Another challenge for us was bordering schools and states. We are close to others that have not transitioned to proficiency, a risk of students leaving to go somewhere else. We found that families that were most engaged, were willing to hang in there with us, those that felt marginalized in the past, felt even more marginalized</p> <p>We found that getting things right for us was hearing from all stakeholders, they wanted grades that reflect student growth--and dispositions that we value, and a transcript that is easy to understand, our board wrote a grading policy, that makes it clear that we value hybrid system that take the best parts of PBL and use some more traditional reporting processes, valuable process for us.</p> <p>THE EQS paint a portrait of what high quality schools look like. This gave us the chance to move and improve, it highly reliable and important to use Revised definition of competency based learning: highlights--students are empowered in decision making, assessment is meaningful, school is differentiated, students advance based on mastery, We have a clear grading policy and work to continue to grow. Statewide we have a lot of growing to do. I hope you all value it as we do.</p> <p>Peter - You detailed a very long process. How long did it take you to safely implement?</p> <p>Jen - We went through fairly rapid iterations. Started in 2016 and policy was implemented last fall.</p> <p>JC - You have read there is a great deal of upset amongst parents. Have those concerns been mitigated some by school boards clarity?</p> <p>Jen - It has. We have a strategic plan that we are trying to get right. In the</p>
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	<p>classroom we still have a lot of work. A lot of consultation with the community about the policy. We began the process in 2016. School board policy was deemed necessary last school year.</p> <p>WM - How far have you gone in implementation?</p> <p>Jen - Policy was adopted by school board. Working to get teachers on the same page.</p> <p>JO - It hadn't dawned on me that this could impact enrollment. Did some leave?</p> <p>Jen - Small numbers it is a factor.</p> <p>JC - Could you see this being an asset to draw kids?</p> <p>Jen - It includes voice and choice.</p> <p>JO - Did you roll it out to all of the grades at the same time?</p> <p>Jen - Policy all at the same time.</p> <p>JO - Acceptance differences across grade levels?</p> <p>Jen - Yes.</p> <p>Jenna - What tenets were already in place that allowed for solid implementation?</p> <p>Jen - A group of teachers really brought-into this process. It did not work well because there were a lot of frustrated people in those iterations. Needed to get school board, administrators, and community on board to create a system. Adaptive change needed to happen.</p> <p>PP - How much was community input?</p> <p>Jen - Critical, school board members collected information and surveyed</p> <p>PP - I imagine demographics have something to do with this too.</p> <p>WM - Time, money, and professional development all need to be figured out.</p> <p>Jen - We are realizing that we need more cohesive time for teachers to work together. Created scheduled time for this. Teaming. Allowing for collaboration during the school day. Considering early-release days. Curriculum camp this summer where teachers can earn credits.</p>
Melissa Connor	<p>JC-thanks for preparing the food for this evening MC: Director of the Stafford Tech Center, we have 8 different sending schools,</p>

	<p>this has been a challenge, this is my 26th year in CTE, one constant for us is that we have been a competency based all through those years, examples of auto mechanics and cooking, we are proud of the work, and this is a natural fit for us. CTE have done different things. We got out ahead of it, five years ago, as a faculty we decided the direction that we wanted to go in. What are the critical skills that they need. We made a decision to move to a 1-4 scale, each teacher had to find prioritized standards, with clear scales (rubrics), each student is given a scale for each standard, we work with students to find student friendly language in those scales, no jargon--its for the students. Went through process of connecting each course and each unit to content competencies and academic competencies--we looked closely at each course--teachers looking closely--what are the academic things that are being learned throughout each course. They conducted an audit five years ago and still are going on that--we are proud that we can articulate what is being taught and assessed in our programs. We have 8 partners that are looking for 8 different things, we want to meet those needs for those sending schools. We have some sending 0-100, we have others 1-4, others A-F, so at the end of each quarter, we hand do conversions in a xcel spreadsheet, utilized Marzano for there 1-4, there was a difference sending schools and we don't control the transcript, so we worked with each school. We serve Mill River--academic class in the moring, 0-4, 2.0 is passing, anything below means remediation, some might access Rutland HS after CTE, 1 student, three different grading systems. Lots of questions from parents--because there is confusion, at least regionally we need to have some consistency.</p> <p>WM-Question about what is passing and the ratio they have been using</p> <p>MC-Difference between credit and earning proficiency as a program completer</p> <p>WM-What have we gained?</p> <p>MC-At Tech Ed, no major difference, the confusion is swapping different reporting systems and that is confusing. Some schools want an overall course grade, some want it broken down more than that. Fortunate to have a flexible staff, knowing that we are constantly recalibrating</p> <p>WM-Can't you get them together and work together</p> <p>MC-That would be great, but eight schools and different boards means lots of differnt ideas</p> <p>PP-Question about flexible pathways and enrollment</p> <p>MC-we are capacity, ACT 77 has helped, we can access younger students, students not necessarily on career tech ed path, still going</p> <p>JO-Your numbers are up, have you seen any individuals who don't come there because of proficiency.</p>
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	MC-No
Steven Dellinger-Pate, Greg Schillinger	<p>T Steven - I am going to highlight one aspect of my letter. You asked the questions: How are we measuring? How are we improving? There is a document called Global Best Practices. Can self-assess your schools based on the principles. School looked at the scales. It is a proficiency system (1 to 5 scale). We realized that one of the standards, equity, our students were performing below peers, not a restorative discipline process. That was our starting point. We implemented restorative practices. Reduced out-of-school practices. We implemented interventions, foundation for the proficiency system. Bolstered math and reading programs. A great number of students need remediation in math when they arrive at the school. We tried to look at the holistic system. One of the standards that was important was economics. None of our students were being scored in economics. Yea, but we don't really teach it. Is a proficiency system necessary for all of these improvement processes?</p> <p>A proficiency system was what we were doing from a state level. We are making these changes in the context of this system. Clear criteria to evaluate our systems. Proficiencies for our own systems.</p> <p>Greg - Start with a quiz. The Vermont state flag has four words on it. Freedom and Unity. Contradiction of freedom to do what we want but unity to do the same thing. This effort is an example between tension between freedom and unity. Freedom for schools to implement but unity because it was from a state-level. We all need to do best practices but we all need to be doing it differently. I have heard 'but I don't like this part'. That is messy.</p> <p>What are our standards? What is our essential learning? Then developed scales based on this. Teachers helped to develop this. Difficult conversations about what is essential and what is not. About five years into this work. This is a constellation of practices - proficiency-based learning. Did this before EQS. Schools are compelled to transform to best practice to stay current. Will continue to evaluate our systems, make changes, and communicate with the community. Refer to systems as proficiency-reference not proficiency-based. Far from doing the work to ensure every student is proficient. We have never striven for universal acceptance, we strive for best practice. Implementing change based on what communities can tolerate. As the Board considers this practice, consider the good that has come from re-examining practices. Many respond to this evaluation by adapting. We need continued and unwavering support to this work. Ensure that we can continue this work without distraction. Change is difficult. You will hear concerns about particular technical aspects.</p> <p>Sabina - I feel like your definition of unity is not the universal definition of unity. You can have freedom and unity at the same time and sometimes that doesn't cause friction.</p>

	<p>Peter - In the 80s some schools encouraged students to drop out. It is clear how far we have come since then.</p> <p>JC - What moves me most about what you are struggling to achieve. Shows promise of making schools more inclusive -- for students who school is not a natural fit, gives them a home. Are we far enough down the road to see that we have moved the needle? Has this made an observable difference?</p> <p>Steven - I would say yes. Anecdote about a student on an individualized learning plan. Him and his mentor were in a debate whether Noam Chomsky was absolutist. Emailed Noam Chomsky. That student was struggling to be in a classroom three years ago. Also, why Act 77 is so important.</p> <p>Greg - The challenge for a comprehensive high school system is finding balance in freedom and unity. The answer for that is personalization.</p> <p>Steven - Graph from Sabina. We have old structures that keep kids in class, we need to have new structures that allow continuous growth for all students.</p> <p>Sabina - Looking at the 1-4 scale, you see proficient is three. Do you want your pilot to be proficient at landing a plane? Do we want the pilot to land the plane 100 out of 100 times? What does proficiency mean? Why extra credit?</p> <p>Greg - I think the topic you are addressing is what do grades mean. That is a local conversation that school communities need to grapple with. What is the meaning of an 87 on a 100 point scale? What proficiency-based learning does is a codified representation of what each level means. What is the meaning of that representation? Schools need to determine that?</p> <p>Sabina - Different schools have different interpretations?</p> <p>Steven - What do we teach to?</p>
Public Comment	<p>Student Senate at Rutland High School - Many positives and negatives. We have seen that there are way more cons. Specifically looking at the grading system. Proficiency-based learning and proficiency-based grading are two different systems. Grading damages the initiative. In theory, it sounds good but when put into practice it damages learning and motivation. Speaking for the student body.</p> <p>Good aspects - rubrics, standards, flexible pathways enhance learning. Good teachers had clear expectations before the system was enacted. We feel like the feedback is the same in both systems for good teachers.</p> <p>1-4 scale: we find it vague and subjective. Clumps good, okay students together. Demotivates students. The categories don't show us where we are at. We had a 1-100 scale at Rutland. Now we receive leveled problems. We don't know why it</p>

	<p>is a particular level. Some teachers have taken level two questions of tests because students would do them and hand it in. Labeled leveled questions on assessments. Level 4 questions are often very difficult to reach. It is more difficult to attain all of the points.</p> <p>Assessments at different times are more meaningful than others.</p> <p>From Jumprope: It is technically impossible to get the highest mark on a standard with decaying average.</p> <p>Finals - Depending on the number of standards, the weight of final exam increases.</p> <p>Peter - How have you presented to the administration?</p> <p>Senate - Weekly meetings. Consistent problems with codifications. Across the state problems. Need some commonality between grading systems.</p> <p>Jenny Gardner at Rutland - Collaborative statement with many faculty members. We believe that all voices should be heard. Committed educators. As experienced professionals, not afraid to innovate. System based primarily in theory. In practice, falls short. PBG concerns - 1 through 4 system is too vague. Score of 1 is passing, students don't have a lot of incentive to do more than bare minimum. May hurt students applying to colleges because lump more students together. Frustrates higher-level students. No evidence that PB transcript benefits the students in college acceptance. Retakes, late homework have no grading consequences. No incentives. Low percentage of students complete work on time. Faced major adjustments at college. Deadlines are firm. Metric for deductions.</p> <p>Friend of speaker from other schools - had former students that dropped out because they were not ready for the rigor of college.</p> <p>Increasingly competitive society.</p> <p>The final weighting is startling and have no opportunity for correction.</p> <p>Flawed grading system. Mediocrity in the classrooms.</p> <p>JC - Some indication of number of faculty?</p> <p>Jenny - More than 70 percent.</p> <p>Sean Marie from Bennington -</p> <p>There are four adult ed centers, the smallest in Bennington. Adult Ed has been using proficiencies since at least 2015. It might be informational for this board</p>
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	<p>that there are many adult ed centers that use proficiencies. Local high schools have to sign off on requirements. Have 87 students in Bennington.</p> <p>Karen Rogers - Parent and teacher at Rutland. My first exposure to standards-based grading when one of my children was in elementary school. Report card was three pages long and gave so much detail. I knew where my student was. Was able to figure out where to work with child. Years pass and different teachers and systems. Middle School - Got a 2 in Spanish, at parent-teacher conference was able to look at assessment. Son had gotten one wrong. He had gotten a two. That is acceptable. It is very subjective.</p> <p>Social Studies he had a three. Took a look at the specifics, could be between 70s and 90s and get a three. Subjective. Don't know what we need to work on.</p> <p>Teacher - I think PBG is done if implemented well. The implementation matters. If my standard is to talk about parties and celebrations in the past tense. I may give benchmarks before that - e.g. vocab. Decaying average, 2's matter when you are learning the foundational skills (some of the assessments can only achieve a 2)</p> <p>The technical aspects matter.</p> <p>Sabina - You can choose different methods within Jumprope program. Different algorithms behind the grades create discrepancies across systems.</p>
<p>Mike McRaith</p>	<p>I want to reiterate a few points -</p> <p>Differentiate Act 77, Proficiency-based assessment, proficiency-based learning</p> <p>They overlap</p> <p>Even from our strongest opposition they agree with the tenets.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) It answers what will students learn? Rich experience of delving into this question. The world has changed. We are walking around with the world's most advanced library. We are in a different time of information. This fundamentally changes schools. Means we have to be really good communities. Critical consumers of information. Need to give them sense of where they are in the world. Content is essential as we work to develop these skills. Other EQS skills. New transferable skills. Business leaders say over again - need strong critical systems, problems solvers, etc. EQS has given schools the chance to really dive deep in this. Heard universal acceptance that it is great to have standards. 2) How will we know that they have learned it? We would have heard variance 20 years ago as well. There is a reveal in the variance now. We are thinking about what it means to do assessment well. We are taking a close look. In Montpelier, we recognized that there was variance already.

	<p>In some schools 4.33 is top, sometimes it is 4, sometimes 100, etc. Pulling back a curtain on what it really means to report. Rubric is a good idea that is universal. Core to proficiencies. Inviting students into what that looks like. Alignment in what we are working on. Transparency in what students are doing. Having an idea of where we are going is good practice. Making language student-friendly. Partnering with students to make understandable and fair.</p> <p>3) Variance in implementation. Every school district was starting in a different place. A lot of big laws that were coming in at the same time. Some schools had more capacity. Other schools had other urgent needs. Somebody said that you should start with intervention. I disagree. I think that we need to determine what we are looking for before we determine whether we need intervention.</p> <p>4) Kate said when a new teacher school comes in, we can tell them standards and where we are. I want to know that there is some uniformity across the school in what teachers are looking.</p> <p>5) Power of Act 77 - No ill words have been said each day. Unique to Vermont. Unique to be able to have different ways to meet standards. When you have an idea of the standards it gives students the opportunity to find other ways that they connect with to show that they meet the standards. Recognizing learning anywhere and any time?</p> <p>Sabina - As a board we should determine what are vision is.</p> <p>Mike - How will we know we are meeting these goals? Need cohesion and operationalization across the state. We heard that this is an iterative process. Jen said that we have a hybrid, we listened to the community. Need a tidy, understandable transcript. We don't want to get knocked off course because of challenges, we want to double down and give more support for those who need it.</p> <p>Schools make choices about grading. Representation is arbitrary. What is behind it is what matters and the people behind it being able to do it.</p> <p>Kim - If the grading is distracting to those efforts, I am appreciative that these pieces don't have to be in conflict with each other.</p> <p>Mike - Core tenets are what matter. What we have learned and how will we know we have learned it.</p>
<p>Conclusion & next steps</p>	<p>Adjourn</p>