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ITEM R

Clarifying Curriculum Related Terms

When educators and the public discuss the learning content and curriculum that are used to guide instruction, multiple terms are used and are sometimes confused. Multiple sources including [The Glossary of Education Reform](#) and [American Library Association](#), provide definitions of these terms. For clarity, the State Board of Education and the Agency of Education use the following definitions to describe our work.

Per Education Quality Standards (2120.5), the State Board of Education is charged with approving state standards for Vermont.

Standards: Standards identify the *essential knowledge, skills and behaviors* that should be taught and learned in school.

- a. *Essential knowledge* is what students should know. It includes the most important and enduring ideas, issues, dilemmas, principles, and concepts from the disciplines.
- b. *Essential skills* are what students should be able to do. Skills are ways of thinking, working, communicating, and investigating.
- c. *Essential behaviors* identify the behaviors related to success in and outside of school. These include (but are not limited to) providing evidence to back up assertions and developing productive, satisfying relationships with others.

Frameworks: A *Framework* is intended to connect inter-related core concepts for student learning in a variety of contexts. In some cases, a Framework may substitute for Standards. In order for a document to be considered a Framework it must:

- a. Provide conceptual understandings guiding student learning.
- b. Serve to facilitate conversations for creation of relevant learning outcomes.
- c. Include a demonstrated tie to the scholarship of teaching and learning.
- d. Be intended to evolve as research and practice develop.

Per Education Quality Standards, the State Board of Education has designated the Supervisory Union/District with responsibility for developing curriculum (2120.6), local assessment systems (2123.2) and graduation requirements (2120.8).

Curriculum Guidelines: Curriculum guidelines lay out best practices for curricula. In Vermont, guidelines are most frequently established by the Supervisory Union/District and provide parameters for teachers to plan within. Generally speaking, these guidelines will include, but aren't limited to:

- a. Alignment to national/local standards
- b. Policy and rules about student groups
- c. A focus to ensure equity and access
- d. Criteria to determine quality curricula

Curriculum: Curriculum refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program. Depending on how broadly educators define or employ the term, curriculum typically refers to the materials, resources and learning experiences that will provide students with the opportunity to master the Standards they are expected to meet. This includes the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning.

Evidence: Evidence is used as an indicator to determine whether or not the student has met the standards of the curriculum at any level of decision making. Evidence includes statewide assessments of learning. Evidence may also serve as determinants in establishing proficiencies at the local level and graduation requirements. Evidence is used by teachers to make decisions related to student proficiency.

