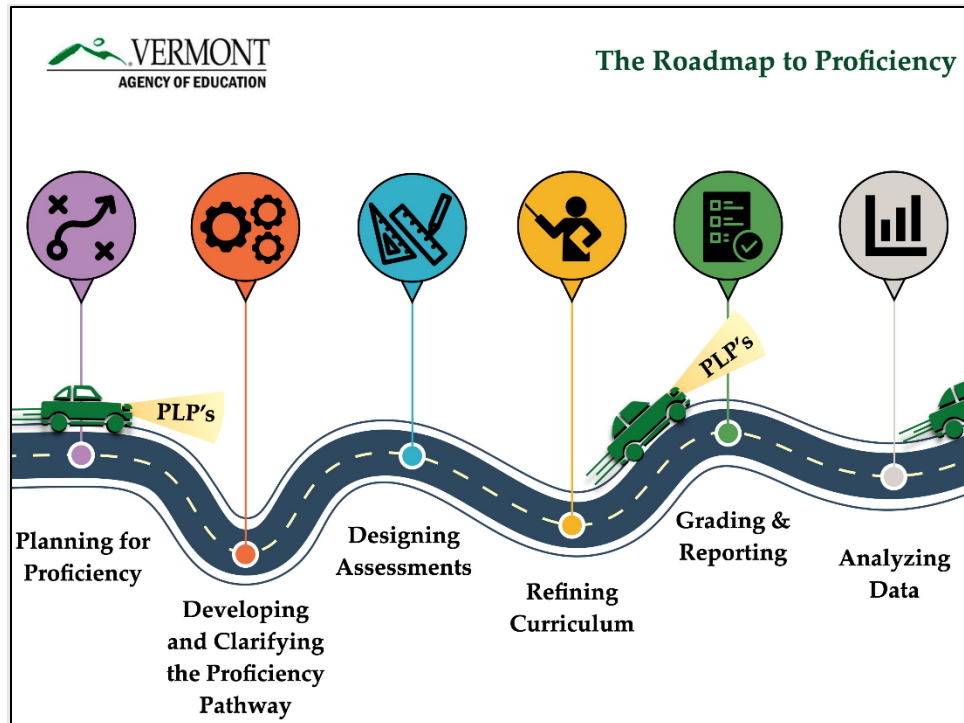


Issue Date: February 9, 2024

## The Vermont Framework for Proficiency: Resources to Support Implementation



**The Roadmap to Proficiency** identifies essential system components within the Framework for Proficiency that empower students to meet the expectations within the Vermont Portrait of a Graduate (PoG). The PoG represents the destination and the guarantee to students, families, and community members that Vermont learners are prepared for college, career, and civic life upon graduation. The system components include Planning for Proficiency, Developing and Clarifying the Proficiency Pathway, Designing Assessments, Refining Curriculum, Grading and Reporting, and Analyzing Data. Within this system, Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) play a crucial role in capturing the breadth and depth of academic and experiential learning opportunities students engage in as they progress along their pathway to graduation.

### Table of Contents

- [Purpose](#)
- [Background and Introduction](#)
- [How to Use This Resource](#)
- [The Framework for Proficiency](#)
  - [The Vermont Portrait of a Graduate](#)
  - [Portrait of a Graduate Resources](#)



- [A Vermont Portrait of a Graduate through a Content Area Lens](#)
- [Content Literacy and Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements](#)
- [Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirement Content Hierarchies](#)
- [Quality Criteria for Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements, Critical Proficiencies, and Priority Performance Indicators](#)
- [Priority Performance Indicators and Transferable Skills Connections](#)
- [Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems: Assessing Student Learning](#)
- [Proficiency-Based Grading and Transcripts](#)
- [Spotlights on Equity Resources](#)
- [Moving Forward](#)

## Purpose

The Vermont Framework for Proficiency has been developed over the course of three years to support Supervisory Unions/Districts (SU/SDs) in developing a coherent, coordinated, and culturally sustaining approach across schools and school districts so that every Vermont learner is empowered to attain the attributes described within the [Vermont Portrait of a Graduate](#).

## Background and Introduction

Proficiency-based learning is a key component of flexible and personalized pathways set forth in [Act 77](#) (Section 2120. Curriculum and Instruction) and the State Board of Education's [Education Quality Standards](#) (EQS). Vermont public schools must provide students with flexible and personalized pathways for progressing through grade levels and to graduation. The EQS states:

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.

The focus of proficiency-based learning is on students' demonstration of desired learning outcomes. Students gain the skills and knowledge required in an area of study, along with those necessary to be successful in career, college, and civic life. Proficiency-based learning is designed to identify and address gaps and provide equitable learning opportunities for every student. This contrasts with traditional systems, which advance students based on seat time.

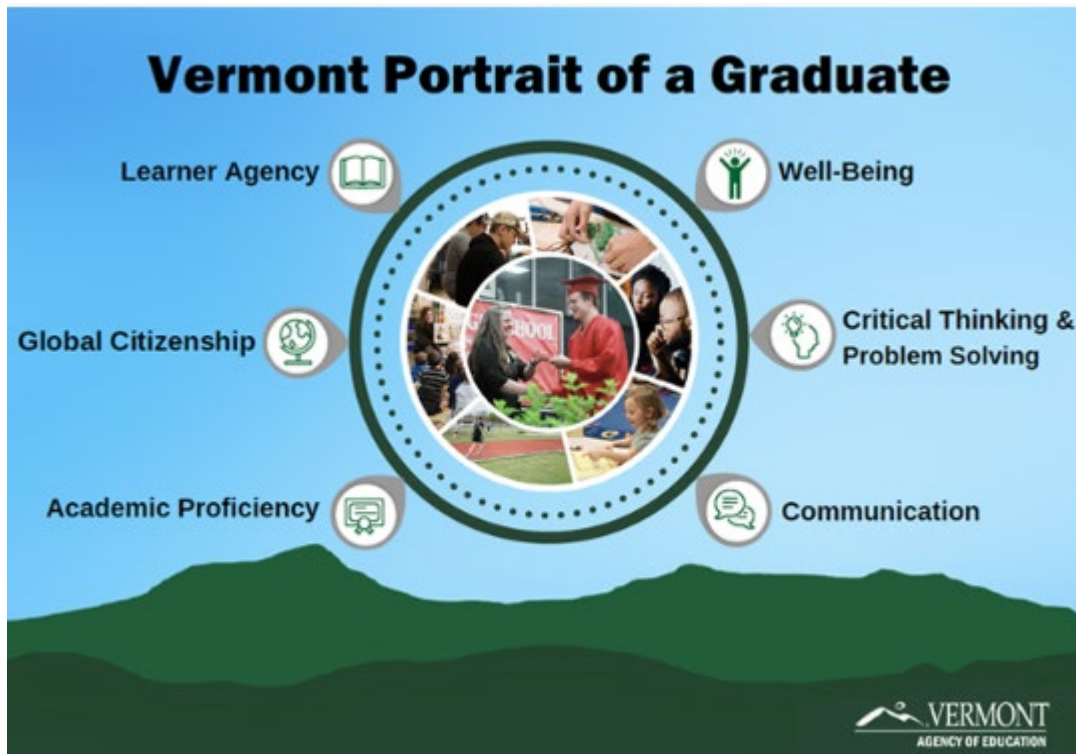
The Vermont Framework for Proficiency supports a systemic approach to K-12 proficiency-based learning that is student-centered and connected across contexts (e.g., Adult Education and Literacy, the High School Completion Program, Career Technical Education Centers, etc.). This Framework includes the Vermont Portrait of a Graduate, content literacy descriptions, Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements as well as the related Critical Proficiencies and Priority Performance Indicators, performance assessments, and proficiency-based grading and reporting.

## How to Use This Resource

This resource is composed of stackable documents that enable educators to access the information that is most relevant to the needs of a particular school system. It is organized from a backward-designed perspective so that the initial documents lay the foundation for subsequent work and inform decisions regarding next steps. The resources in this document provide information about how different parts of the Framework for Proficiency connect and support one another.

## The Framework for Proficiency

### The Vermont Portrait of a Graduate



[The Vermont Portrait of a Graduate \(PoG\)](#) specifies the cognitive, personal, and interpersonal skills and knowledge that students should demonstrate upon graduation. It goes beyond traditional academic achievement and focuses on preparing students for success in career, college, and civic life. The PoG can be used as a tool for reviewing and refining Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements, as well as a guide for making instructional decisions.

### Portrait of a Graduate Development Resources

Created in collaboration with Great Schools Partnership, the resources below can be used as part of the Portrait of a Graduate development/refinement process.

- [Building Your Steering Committee](#)
- [Data Analysis: Feedback to Language](#)

- [Focus Group: Attribute Sort](#)
- [Focus Group: Chalk Talk](#)
- [Focus Group: Vision Document Sort](#)
- [Focus Group: Wagon Wheel](#)

## **A Vermont Portrait of a Graduate through a Content Area Lens**

Instruction in content areas should provide students with engaging learning opportunities that support the development of PoG skills and knowledge. The following resources highlight connections between the six attributes of the PoG and each content area.

- [A Vermont Portrait of a Graduate and Arts Education](#)
- [A Vermont Portrait of a Graduate and Social Studies](#)
- [A Vermont Portrait of a Graduate and World Language](#)
- [A Vermont Portrait of a Graduate as a Function of Math](#)
- [A Vermont Portrait of a Graduate Through English Language Arts](#)
- [A Vermont Portrait of a Graduate Through Health and Physical Education](#)
- [A Vermont Portrait of a Graduate Through Science and STEM](#)

## **Content Literacy and Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements**

AOE staff researched the knowledge and skills necessary for a learner to be deemed literate in a content area. These content literacy documents are the result of that work.

- [Artistic Literacy](#)
- [English Language Arts Literacy](#)
- [Financial Literacy](#)
- [Health Literacy](#)
- [Mathematics Literacy](#)
- [Physical Education Literacy](#)
- [Science Literacy](#)
- [Social Studies Literacy](#)
- [World Language Literacy](#)

Each content literacy description was pared down to its essential elements, resulting in one PBGR for each content area. PBGRs encompass the content knowledge and transferable skills that students must exhibit for college and career readiness, thus qualifying a student for high school graduation. Every PBGR must also align with one or more attributes of the PoG.

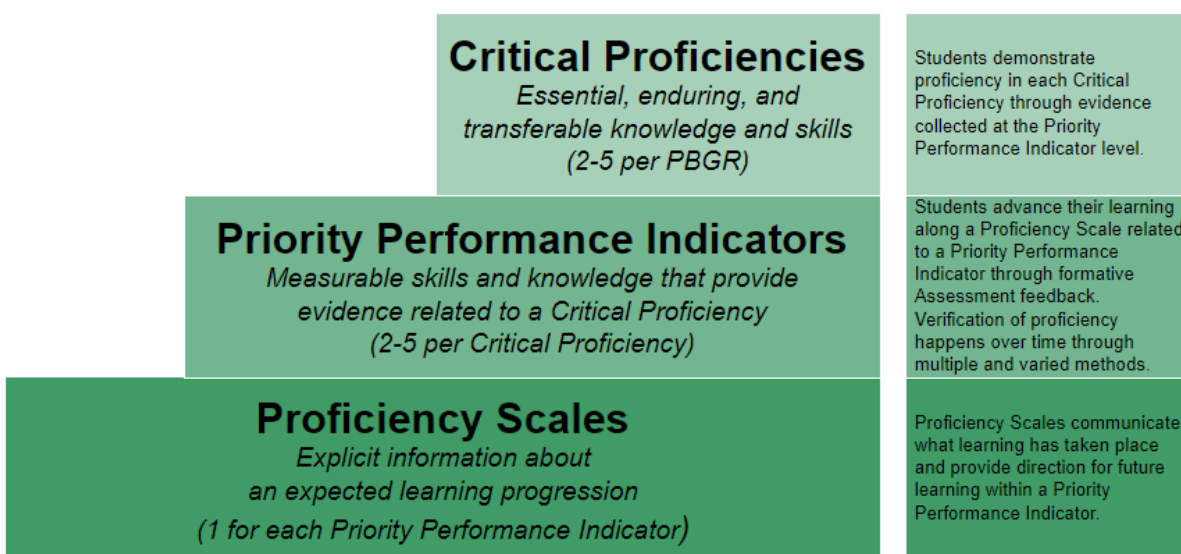
Critical Proficiencies (CPs) are directly connected to PBGRs and identify the enduring skills and knowledge that all students need to demonstrate (across contexts) to be prepared for future learning. Students demonstrate proficiency in each CP through evidence collected at the Priority Performance Indicator level.

Priority Performance Indicators (PPIs) are used to determine proficiency of the larger grain size Critical Proficiency. Student proficiency of PPIs should be formally assessed through the use of Proficiency Scales as part of an SU/SD's Local Comprehensive Assessment System.

## Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirement Content Hierarchies

### Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirement

*Description of what it means to be literate in a content area.  
(1 per content area)*



Each content Hierarchy is composed of an overarching Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirement representing what it means to be literate in a content area, Critical Proficiencies that clarify the essential knowledge and skills within a content area, Priority Performance Indicators that will be taught and assessed, and Proficiency Scales that show a continuum of distinct levels of knowledge and skills relative to a specific performance indicator.

The Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirement (PBGR) Content Hierarchies support equity and coherence by providing a coordinated vision of student-centered learning across Vermont schools. The hierarchies serve as the foundation for the implementation of standards adopted by the Vermont State Board of Education, Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems, flexible pathways, and personalized learning plans.

- [Arts Proficiency-Based Graduation Hierarchy](#)
- [English Language Arts Proficiency-Based Graduation Hierarchy](#)
- [Financial Literacy Proficiency-Based Graduation Hierarchy](#)
- [Mathematics Proficiency-Based Graduation Hierarchy](#)

- [Science Proficiency-Based Graduation Hierarchy](#)
- [Social Studies Proficiency-Based Graduation Hierarchy](#)

The World Language Hierarchy is currently under development. Health and Physical Education Hierarchies will be developed once the new standards are released in the spring of 2024. Critical Proficiencies and Priority Performance Indicators are currently being developed for kindergarten through eighth grade and will be added to this document once they are finalized.

The [Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirement Hierarchies Development Process](#) explains how content specialists, in collaboration with educators from the field, developed the hierarchies for each of the content areas. Additionally, the [Student-Centered Terminology](#) document provides clarity regarding how PBGRs are defined by the AOE and includes a variety of terms used in proficiency-based systems.

### **Proficiency-Based Graduation Content Hierarchies Feedback Form**

The AOE is interested in gathering educators' feedback as they use the Proficiency-Based Graduation Hierarchies. Feedback can be shared through [this form](#).

### **Quality Criteria for Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements, Critical Proficiencies, and Priority Performance Indicators**

The purpose of these documents is to provide criteria to discuss and evaluate the quality of Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGRs), Critical Proficiencies (CPs), and Priority Performance Indicators (PPIs), key components of the Vermont Framework for Proficiency.

- [Critical Proficiencies Quality Criteria](#)
- [Priority Performance Indicators Quality Criteria](#)
- [Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements Quality Criteria](#)

### **Priority Performance Indicators and Transferable Skills Connections**

Transferable skills are an essential set of skills and competencies that promote the integration and application of knowledge across contexts and are critically important to success in today's world, particularly in post-secondary and career readiness programs. These documents outline connections between the transferable skills and the Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirement (PBGR) Hierarchy, which includes the PBGR, Critical Proficiencies, and Priority Performance Indicators. It is intended to exemplify how transferable skills related to Priority Performance Indicators can be embedded into instruction and performance assessments within a unit of study.

- [Arts Priority Performance Indicators and Transferable Skills Connections](#)
- [English Language Arts Priority Performance Indicators and Transferable Skills Connections](#)



- [Financial Literacy Priority Performance Indicators and Transferable Skills Connections](#)
- [Mathematics Priority Performance Indicators and Transferable Skills Connections](#)
- [Science Priority Performance Indicators and Transferable Skills Connections](#)
- [Social Studies Priority Performance Indicators and Transferable Skills Connections](#)

## **Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems: Assessing Student Learning**

A Local Comprehensive Assessment System (LCAS) is a coordinated and comprehensive system that assesses the standards approved by the State Board of Education; employs a balance of assessment types, including but not limited to, teacher-or learner-designed assessments, portfolios, performances, exhibitions, and projects; includes both formative and summative assessments; enables decisions to be made about progression and graduation, including measuring proficiency-based learning; informs the development of Personalized Learning Plans and support; provides data that informs decisions regarding instruction, professional learning, and educational resources and curriculum; and reflects strategies and goals outlined in the district's Continuous Improvement Plan ([EQS](#), 2123.2).

The 2023 [Strengthening and Streamlining Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems: Guidelines and Support for Leadership Teams](#) provides information to help educators in supervisory unions and districts develop a streamlined, balanced local comprehensive assessment system (LCAS) for all students. This document was initially produced in 2017 following a thorough review of the literature and current practices in the field of student assessment by Agency of Education (AOE) staff as well as educators in the field. It has been updated by AOE staff with additional work completed on Appendix B that now includes assessment resources for content areas beyond mathematics and English language arts (ELA).

- [Arts LCAS Appendix B](#)
- [English Language Arts and Literacy LCAS Appendix B](#)
- [Financial Literacy LCAS Appendix B](#)
- [Math LCAS Appendix B](#)
- [Physical Education/Health LCAS Appendix B](#)
- [Science LCAS Appendix B](#)
- [Social Studies LCAS Appendix B](#)

[Strengthening and Streamlining Vermont Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems: Defining Essential Components](#) was created from the Strengthening and Streamlining Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems, in order to develop a shared understanding of assessment terminology that is commonly used in Vermont.

## **The Role of Performance Assessments**

Performance assessments, one component of LCAS, are any teacher- or student-designed learning activity or investigation in which students demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and/or skills through a performance task. Performance assessments engage students in meaningful learning in authentic contexts, show genuine applications of knowledge, and yield a tangible product and/or performance that serves as evidence of learning. A performance task is what students actually do within a larger performance assessment framework. Tasks built around student interests engage students and help them make connections to their personal lives.

[Essential Components of the Vermont Framework for Proficiency: Performance Assessments](#) describes how performance assessments can be used to provide opportunities for learners to strengthen student agency and demonstrate the cognitive, personal, and interpersonal skills and knowledge needed to achieve college and career readiness. Below are additional resources to support the development of engaging and relevant performance assessments.

- [Essential Components for Ensuring Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems are Culturally Relevant and Equitable](#)
- [Learner Agency and Authentic Assessments: Empowering Learners through Authentic Performance Assessments](#)
- [Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems in School District Systems: Act 173 Technical Guidance](#)
- [Local Comprehensive Assessment System Quality Criteria Single Point Rubric](#)
- [Performance Assessment Tools and Resources](#)
- [Strengthening Local Assessment Systems for Personalized, Proficiency-Based Education: Strategies and Tools for Professional Learning](#)

## **Proficiency Scales**

Proficiency Scales are a valuable component of a proficiency-based assessment system since they establish clear expectations, enable accurate assessment, promote individualized learning, and support students' growth and development. A Proficiency Scale is a criterion-based assessment tool that is task neutral and includes explicit expectations for learning at each level. A Proficiency Scale should be designed to show a continuum of distinct levels of knowledge and skills relative to a specific performance indicator. These distinct levels are qualitative (not quantitative) and describe what the student can do (rather than not do) at each proficiency level. The Proficiency Scale is used to develop learning targets, assess where a student is along a learning progression, and determine if a student has mastered the overarching critical proficiency. These results should be used in concert with data related to other Priority Performance Indicators to report student attainment of the corresponding Critical Proficiency.



The [Vermont Framework for Proficiency: Developing Proficiency Scales](#) describes a process by which SU/SDs can develop proficiency scales that are directly connected to Priority Performance Indicators (PPIs).

- The [Unpacking Priority Performance Indicators and Proficiency Scales Template](#) includes templates for unpacking Priority Performance Indicators and corresponding grade-level standards as well as developing proficiency scales.

The [Vermont Framework for Proficiency: Proficiency Scales and Rubrics](#) provides information about the similarities and differences between proficiency scales and rubrics. Additionally, the document explains when to use each tool and specific suggestions for classroom application.

The [Proficiency Scales Quality Criteria](#) should be used to refine a Proficiency Scale. A proficiency scale does not need to score a "clearly evident" in all categories in order to be considered high quality. However, that would be a collective, intentional decision made by educators and possibly students.

## **Proficiency-Based Grading and Transcripts**

As educators move forward with the implementation of personalized, proficiency-based systems, new grading systems that communicate where a student is along a continuum of learning are being designed. Decisions regarding grading are made at the local level considering research, community need, and transition timelines. The goal is to create grading systems that accurately convey what students have learned in relation to learning expectations.

Proficiency-based grading identifies where a student is along a continuum of learning, often with a four-point scale (e.g., beginning, developing, proficient, and expanding) rather than a percentage scale that has been used traditionally. In a proficiency-based system, the purpose of grading is to let all stakeholders – parents/guardians, students, educators, and community members – understand what students know and how they perform in relation to expected learning outcomes.

A proficiency-based transcript is a type of academic record that represents a student's educational accomplishments and the proficiencies that have been met in a more detailed manner when compared to traditional transcripts. Instead of relying solely on letter grades or course titles, proficiency-based transcripts focus on showcasing the specific skills and knowledge that a student has gained throughout their education.

- [The Mastery Transcript Consortium \(MTC\) Panel Video](#)
- [Mastery Transcript Consortium Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Proficiency-Based Grading and Transcripts: Responding to Parent and Community Concerns](#)
- [Research Brief: Proficiency-Based Grading Practices](#)
- [Vermont Proficiency-Based Grading Practices](#)

## Spotlights on Equity Resources

Educational equity means that every student has access to the resources, opportunities, and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, whatever their race, gender/identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, language, ability, family background, or family income may be. (Adapted from CCSSO, Leading for Equity.) The Spotlights on Equity documents below provide a list of considerations and resources for the purpose of supporting equity and access across content areas, emphasizing high quality and culturally sustaining learning opportunities for all students.

- [English Language Arts: Spotlight on Equity Resources](#)
- [Financial Literacy: Spotlight on Equity Resources](#)
- [Health Education: Spotlight on Equity Resources](#)
- [Mathematics: Spotlight on Equity Resources](#)
- [Performing Arts: Spotlight on Equity Resources](#)
- [Physical Education: Spotlight on Equity Resources](#)
- [Science and STEM Education: Spotlight on Equity Resources](#)
- [Social Studies: Spotlight on Equity Resources](#)
- [Visual Arts: Spotlight on Equity Resources](#)
- [World Language: Spotlight on Equity Resources](#)

## Moving Forward

This is a living document that will be updated as the AOE generates new resources through collaborative efforts with contractors as well as the field. The goal is to support continuous improvement of proficiency-based systems through professional learning opportunities and resources that reflect best practices and enable SU/SDs to create systems that enable students to develop the attributes described within the Vermont Portrait of a Graduate.