

Flexible Pathways: The Route Changes but the Destination Stays the Same

Vermont Stories Discussion Guide

Overview

In this brief video, Vermont educators define what flexible pathways means to them and why they believe it is a key practice in personalized, proficiency-based learning. The video was filmed at the 2017 Middle Grades Collaborative Conference, which brought together approximately 150 teachers and students from across the state to speak about their work in flexible pathways.

Definitions

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

Personalized Learning Plans: A formal document created by students, parents, and teachers in which students set goals based on their academic and career objectives and personal interests, collect evidence of their learning over time, and have flexibility in where, when, and how they learn.

Proficiency-Based Learning: A model of education in which there are clear expectations for student learning, and all decisions, reporting, and grading are guided by those expectations. In a proficiency-based system, the goal is for students to demonstrate evidence of mastery in all essential proficiencies. This is in contrast to traditional systems, which advance students based on seat time.

Student-Led Conference: A format that flips the traditional Parent/Teacher conference so that students guide a discussion about their progress toward their goals, evidence of learning, and Personalized Learning Plan with their family and teacher.

Discussion Questions:

- How would you explain flexible pathways to a parent who comes to you looking to understand?
- What impressed you about the work being done around flexible pathways by these VT teachers?
- Why is it important to these teachers to develop flexible pathways? What are the benefits of flexible pathways for students?



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- What strengths do you, your colleagues, and your school bring to the development of flexible pathways?
- What challenges do you envision in implementing flexible pathways in your school?



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