

# Personalized Learning Plans at Main Street Middle School: Charting a Path to Engaged Student Learning

## *Vermont Stories Discussion Guide*

### Overview

This video features 7th and 8th grade teacher Don Taylor and his students. Don has been using personalized learning plans for the past four years and sees them as a promising strategy for engaging students. This video was filmed at Main Street Middle School in Montpelier, Vermont.

### Key Concepts

***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.

***Personalized Learning Plan (PLP):*** A plan created by the student, parents/guardians, and teachers that defines the scope and rigor of academic and experiential opportunities that support the student in secondary school completion, postsecondary readiness, and civic engagement. The planning process, updated at least annually, includes goal setting and reflection to ensure the student's emerging abilities, aspirations, dispositions, and interests chart the student's path toward proficiency.

***Student Agency:*** Students taking ownership in the learning process because they know the goals for their learning and have the skills and confidence to engage in self-directed learning.

***Student Engagement:*** The degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students bring to the learning process. Educators can support student engagement by providing opportunities for students to be drivers of their educational experiences, providing real world learning opportunities, incorporating student voice and choice, and creating flexibility in where, when, and how students learn.

### Discussion Questions

- What did you notice in how students spoke about their experience using PLPs?
- What is the role of reflection in the learning process? How do PLPs support student reflection?
- What skills do teachers need to support students in using PLPs?



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- How would you convince a skeptical parent or colleague about the value of PLPs?
- During the video, Don Taylor says, “We still have a lot of kids who are not successful in school, who are not engaged, who would rather not be here. Will personalized learning solve that problem?”. Don gives his answer, but what do you think? Why?

### **More Information**

- LEARN more about [Main Street Middle School](#).
- REVIEW the Vermont AOE's resources on [Personalized Learning](#) for conceptual frameworks and templates.

