

Flexible Pathways

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Slide 1: Some Vermont schools have been promoting flexible pathways for years, and some are just beginning this work. This overview is designed to center us on some common definitions and key understandings.

Slide 2: Act 77 defines flexible pathways as “any combination of high-quality academic and experiential components leading to secondary school completion and postsecondary readiness”. Students are not limited to traditional academic pathways but can combine them with experiential components. Students’ paths to graduation will look different based on their interests and needs.

Slide 3: Flexible pathways opens new options for student learning. Some of these options could include: dual enrollment, early college, work-based learning, virtual and blended learning, career and technical education, community-based or service learning, expanded learning opportunities, and the high school completion program. However, there may be other rigorous and engaging options outside of this list. In the following slides, we will explore these core options for flexible pathways more fully.

Slide 4: Dual enrollment means high school students can take a course offered by an accredited postsecondary institution alongside their other high school courses, and receive both high school or college credit for those courses. This allows students to engage in learning opportunities not offered by their school, practice learning within a college classroom, and accumulate college credit prior to being full tuition-paying students.

Slide 5: While dual enrollment entails students taking high school and college courses at the same time, early college allows high school seniors to take a full year of college courses that count toward their high school degree. These students will receive funding equal to 87% of their base education funding, which colleges accept instead of tuition. Early college allows high school seniors to engage in a full year of learning at the college level and build college credit while in high school.

Slide 6: Work-based learning allows students to build employment experience and form connections between academics and careers. It helps students explore career options, build transferable skills, and engage in authentic challenges. Work-based learning can take the form of internships and apprenticeships and helps increase engagement and authenticity.



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Slide 7: In virtual learning, the teacher and student interact through technology, either in real-time or asynchronously. Virtual learning can increase the learning opportunities available to students and can allow students to work at their own schedule or pace. Blended learning combines both virtual learning and in-person classroom learning and can provide additional opportunities for students to reinforce content and skills with or without teacher supervision.

Slide 8: Vermont has a network of regional technical centers and comprehensive high schools across the state, serving 15 service regions. These hubs provide programs to help students build the core academic, technical, and occupational skills needed for high skill, high wage careers. Career and technical education emphasizes authentic, real world learning, and can be a powerful lever in engaging students.

Slide 9: Community-based or service learning allows students to apply academic and transferable skills to pressing issues in their communities. Through community-based learning, students can build their civic engagement and sense of efficacy, and give back to their communities.

Slide 10: Expanded learning opportunities might include afterschool or summer programs. They can help students build additional skills outside of normal learning time, such as engaging in the arts, practicing a sport, or pursuing a passion. They can also be a helpful resource for working families, because they help provide structure for students while families are at work.

Slide 11: The high school completion program is an alternative path to a high school degree for students over 16 years old who are either highly skilled, at risk of dropping out, or not enrolled in high school. It is meant to provide a comparable path to a degree for students who may face special circumstances in achieving their degree.

Slide 12: There are many details to consider as schools expand flexible pathway options. Some primary considerations revolve around scheduling, community support, staff capacity, communicating with stakeholders, and necessary infrastructure. We encourage educators to learn from the experiences and systems of other schools that have made this shift. The questions identified here can serve as a starting point.

Slide 13: Thank you for watching. The resources and activities on this page will help you explore further aspects of flexible pathways. If you have any questions or want to share



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additional resources you think might help others, please contact the Center for Collaborative Education at vtclg@ccebos.org.



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