

**AN  
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OPPORTUNITY**

*The first report of the*

**VERMONT  
PUBLIC EDUCATION  
PARTNERSHIP**

**Montpelier, Vermont**

**January 29, 2001**

## A LETTER FROM THE PARTNERS

Dear Fellow Vermonter:

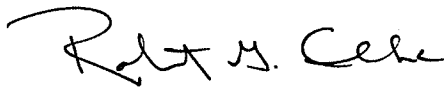
We are pleased to present the first agenda and recommendations of the newly formed **Vermont Public Education Partnership**. As the chief officers of the Vermont Department of Education, the Vermont State Colleges, and the University of Vermont, we three represent all of public education in the state — an awesome responsibility, to be sure, but one that offers us an opportunity to work together in ways that can make a long-term positive difference for Vermonters, both present and future.

We believe this is the first time in Vermont's history that all three people in our positions have begun a comprehensive collaboration for all of public education in our state, at all levels. Although this is a beginning springboard for future cooperative ventures, it is historic in itself. We began this work because we recognized that addressing the state's educational needs, and improving education for all Vermonters, are goals we cannot meet alone.

Working together, we can make the most of our resources. We can share ideas and expertise. We can smooth the transitions from each level of education to the next. We can take optimum advantage of new means to expand access and opportunity, for all Vermonters, from pre-kindergarten through college, and on to graduate or professional education.

Some of the initiatives we describe in this report are already underway. Some are about ready to be implemented. Some are in the planning stages. Some are dreams for the future. We are committed to this long-term effort, and we will be seeking the support of our respective Boards, the Governor, and the Legislature to pursue the public-policy enhancements that we believe will lead to significant improvements in preK-20 public education throughout Vermont.

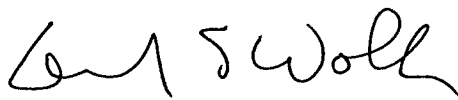
Sincerely,



Robert Clarke  
Chancellor  
Vermont State Colleges



Judith Ramaley  
President  
University of Vermont



David Wolk  
Commissioner  
Vermont Department of Education

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The new **Vermont Public Education Partnership** brings together the state commissioner of education, the president of the University of Vermont, and the chancellor of the Vermont State College system in a working effort to plan and act systematically for the future of public education in Vermont, from pre-kindergarten through college and beyond.

Together, Commissioner David Wolk, UVM President Judith Ramaley, and VSC Chancellor Robert Clarke represent all of Vermont public education. They first began working together in 1998, as members of the Vermont Commission on Higher Education Funding.

The three developed a mutual respect and rapport — and they share a strong awareness of how their institutions should be working closely together, to extend genuine educational access to all Vermonters, to make real progress in addressing shared issues, and to manage in a newly interactive way the transitions between secondary and higher education.

In an era when higher levels of skills and knowledge are so important to Vermonters and to Vermont's future, the prospect of this working partnership made much sense to all three leaders. They began their effort in early 2000, at a planning session in Judith Ramaley's office. Over the year that followed, the three gathered for six all-day working sessions, joined by other leaders from their organizations.

This report describes the first initiatives on which the Partnership has chosen to focus. Each one can leverage wide-ranging, long-term positive change that will benefit Vermonters throughout the state.

Early in this process, the partners mapped out five criteria for any project they would put on their agenda:

1. It must involve a significant issue for Vermont — one that has not yet been fully addressed.
2. It must genuinely require a three-way partnership among DOE, UVM, and VSC.
3. It must demand a sharing of resources, among the partners and the state.
4. It must need policy action by the partners' respective boards and/or by the Vermont Legislature.
5. Its results must improve educational access and service for all Vermonters.


This report presents, first, a **Public Policy Agenda** — the Partnership's first set of collaborative projects that will need, in the near future, some level of support from the Governor, the Legislature, and the Vermont public. These proposals offer a package for investment that can generate many years of positive returns, in much-needed areas.

This Public Policy Agenda involves:

- ◆ **Educator Quality:** a linked set of initiatives that will address shortages in teachers and education leaders; will assist young people in choosing and entering the field; and will build on exciting new approaches to professional development for working teachers.
- ◆ **Special Education:** a coordinated effort to meet a pressing workforce need, by bringing teacher training for special education into Vermont communities — making it easier for classroom teachers, paraeducators, and others to qualify for this much-needed profession.
- ◆ **Dual Enrollment:** creating consistent statewide access to college-level courses for deserving and underserved high school students. For this initiative, the Partnership requests the Legislature's support for school districts paying postsecondary institutions one twelfth of the state block grant per course, for up to two courses per year.



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- ◆ **Distance Learning:** a chance to link networks and learning technologies already in place, and those not yet developed, in a coordinated planning effort to bridge long-standing geographic and economic barriers to learning.

Next, under **Additional Areas of Partnership**, are synopses of several more ongoing efforts that also involve collaboration, and also aim to accomplish or inform long-term problem-solving:

- ◆ **PreK-20 Alignment:** strategies for aligning all levels of Vermont public education, from prekindergarten through graduate levels. This initiative includes developing high school transcripts based on Vermont standards; aligning high-school graduation and college admissions requirements; and tracking the performance of Vermont high-school graduates at Vermont public colleges.
- ◆ **Responding to the Shortage of Nurses:** supporting the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Nursing Commission for addressing Vermont's pressing need for these vital professionals in health care.
- ◆ **Workforce Education and Training:** creating a broad statewide collaboration to help meet education, training, and retraining needs of Vermont employers, at all levels of skills.

Finally, this report identifies **Related and Future Initiatives**, which the Partnership expects to put on its agenda for 2002. These are all important issues that many Vermont people and organizations are currently working on, to which the partners intent to lend their support:

- ◆ **Adult Essential Skills**
- ◆ **School to Work**
- ◆ **Early Education**
- ◆ **Paraeducator Education and Training.**

These are followed by three appendices, with the "white papers" that the Partnership has developed on educator policy, dual enrollment, and distance learning.

Each initiative that the Partnership has taken on seeks to build on new ideas and advances that have been tested in Vermont schools, communities, and region. And each seeks, in the end, to benefit individual Vermonters in all regions of the state.

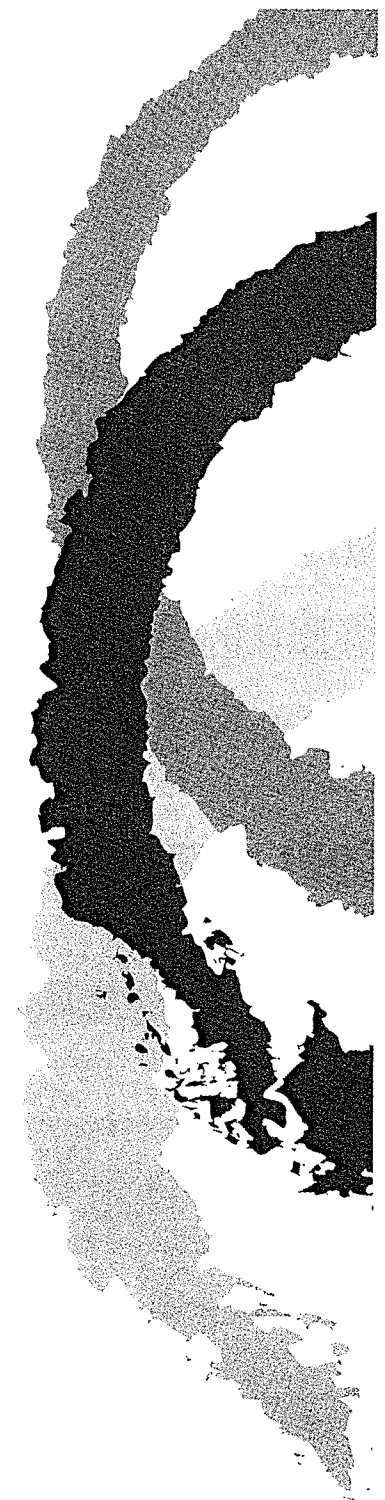
Vermont is a small-enough state that its educational leaders can truly work together. As we do, we can keep the focus on students. Our schools, teachers, and institutions of higher education have been innovative enough already that we have much to build on, and many opportunities to try.

For fiscal year 2002, the DOE, VSC, and UVM will make significant investments to support the initiatives detailed here.

This is just the beginning. The members of the **Vermont Public Education Partnership** intend to keep on working together. We will keep the focus on improving service to students, and keep pushing the possibilities of public education. We hope, and believe, that this is an exciting and promising start.

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# I. PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

## COLLABORATING FOR ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY

This **Vermont Public Education Partnership** — unique in the state, and perhaps in the nation — brings together the state commissioner of education, the president of the University of Vermont, and the chancellor of the Vermont State College system in a strong, systematic effort to improve the future of all public education in our state, from pre-kindergarten through college and beyond.

In 1998, Commissioner David Wolk, UVM President Judith Ramaley, and VSC Chancellor Robert Clarke first began working together as members of the Vermont Commission on Higher Education Funding. The three developed a mutual respect and rapport. They also share a strong awareness of how their institutions should be working closely together — to extend genuine educational access to all Vermonters, to make real progress in addressing shared issues, and to manage in a newly active way the transitions between secondary and higher education.

Providing equal access to high-quality education for all Vermonters is now a priority of both law and public consensus in our state. And in an era when higher levels of skills and knowledge are so important to Vermonters and to Vermont's future, the prospect of a broad working partnership among the leaders of all Vermont public education offers our best chance to bring together the resources, capacities, and ideas we need to achieve these goals.

In early 2000, the **Public Education Partnership** began with a planning session in Judith Ramaley's office. Over the next year the three members gathered for six all-day working sessions, joined by other leaders from their organizations.

This report describes the first initiatives on which the Partnership has chosen to focus. Each one can leverage wide-ranging, long-term positive change that will benefit Vermonters throughout the state.

Early in this process, the partners mapped out five criteria for any project they would put on their agenda:

1. It must involve a significant issue for Vermont — one that has not yet been fully addressed.
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This **Public Policy Agenda** outlines the Partnership's first set of collaborative projects that will need, in the near future, some level of support from the Governor, the Legislature, and the Vermont public. These proposals offer a package for investment that can generate many years of positive returns, in much-needed areas.

For fiscal year 2002, the DOE, VSC, and UVM will make significant investments to support the initiatives detailed here.

This Agenda involves:

- ◆ **Educator Quality:** a linked set of initiatives that will address shortages in teachers and education leaders; will assist young people in choosing and entering the field; and will build on exciting new approaches to professional development for working teachers.



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- ◆ **Special Education:** a coordinated effort to meet a pressing workforce need, by bringing teacher training for special education into Vermont communities — making it easier for classroom teachers, paraeducators, and others to qualify for this essential profession.
- ◆ **Distance Learning:** a chance to link networks and learning technologies already in place, in a coordinated planning effort to bridge long-standing geographic and economic barriers to learning.
- ◆ **Dual Enrollment:** creating consistent statewide access to college-level courses for deserving and underserved high school students, with a statewide policy on payment for these courses, and an articulation agreement to offer Vermont high schools on the application of dual-enrollment credits.

The partners believe strongly that, in each of these areas — and in the additional initiatives still ahead of us — our collaboration can, with support from the Governor and the General Assembly, accomplish far more than any or all of us can on our own. There is energy here, and much possibility for energizing the future of Vermont.

## A. Addressing Educator Quality

### *An Essential Effort for Vermont's Future*

The success of Vermont's continuing effort to reform, even transform, K-12 public education "relies on developing and supporting strong teachers and school leaders," Education Commissioner David Wolk told the National Goals Panel in June 2000 testimony.

"The challenge today is twofold: preparing excellent teachers and leaders to enter the profession," the Commissioner declared, "and providing our current educator workforce the support they need to grow and thrive in a transforming educational system."

Promoting and developing ways to meet this challenge on educator quality is the centerpiece of the Partnership's work together. Put simply, nothing is more important to the future of Vermont public education.

As the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) said in *What Matters Most*, its influential 1996 report: "What teachers know and can do makes the crucial difference in what children learn ... New courses, tests, and curriculum reforms can be important starting points, but they are meaningless if teachers cannot use them well."

As our part of the national movement spearheaded by NCTAF's State Partnership Network, of which Vermont is a member, the Partnership has begun a wide-ranging campaign to greatly strengthen and enhance our vital resource of educators and education leaders. We have a three-fold strategy:

#### 1. Support Creation of the Vermont Commission on Educator Quality

A number of initiatives in this area are already underway, across Vermont and in parts of the state. A Commission on Educator Quality — a periodic gathering of key education leaders — will provide a vital ingredient: informed leadership.

With a broad-based membership, the Commission will inform, react to, and guide a wide variety of educator-quality projects, coordinating them to benefit the whole state. The Commission will set policy, integrate local and regional initiatives, bring together talented people with useful ideas, and generally focus on maintaining our progress and encouraging new initiatives in:

- ◆ recruiting young people and mid-career professionals to the educational professions;
- ◆ strengthening teacher-education programs;

- ◆ refocusing educator licensing requirements, to better align with Vermont's standards for student achievement;
- ◆ developing mentoring programs to support new educators; and
- ◆ providing more high-quality professional development.

The Partnership will work closely with the Commission, and on broader collaborations that include other partners.

## 2. Expand the Professional Development School Model

How to find new ways to do professional development, when school calendars are so full and good teachers are reluctant to lose classroom time? Here, again, a number of initiatives and good ideas are being tried in Vermont. We have the chance to expand and extend two that are exceptionally promising:

- ◆ **Regional Professional Development "Hubs."** Schools and districts that have made the most progress in effective professional development can become resources for an entire region, and can serve as models for other Professional Development Schools. Each Professional Development School (PDS) can model best practices in teacher education, provide high-quality professional and leadership development, support national board certification, and promote innovation. We envision these regional hubs as centers for active collaboration between K-12 faculties and college-level education and arts/science faculty.
- ◆ **Teacher Leaders, Teacher Mentors:** A number of Vermont school districts have been following the lead of District 2 in New York City, using federal school funding to free up some of their strongest teachers to work with other teachers, right within the classroom. To build on this promising approach, we propose developing a statewide program to train and support local teacher mentors, to promote models of mentoring, and to provide financial incentives for national board-certified teachers to be mentors. Five pilot local mentoring programs have been identified for potential grant support.

With federal Goals 2000 funding for professional development running out this year, there is need to find new sources of support for this very important project area.

## 3. Develop "Teach Vermont" and "Lead Vermont" Programs

These will be both fellowship programs and active networks devoted to encouraging and supporting talented people as they consider a career in education, and as they prepare to become Vermont teachers and education leaders. In this initiative, the Partnership will invite collaboration with Vermont independent colleges.

*Teach Vermont* and *Lead Vermont* will:

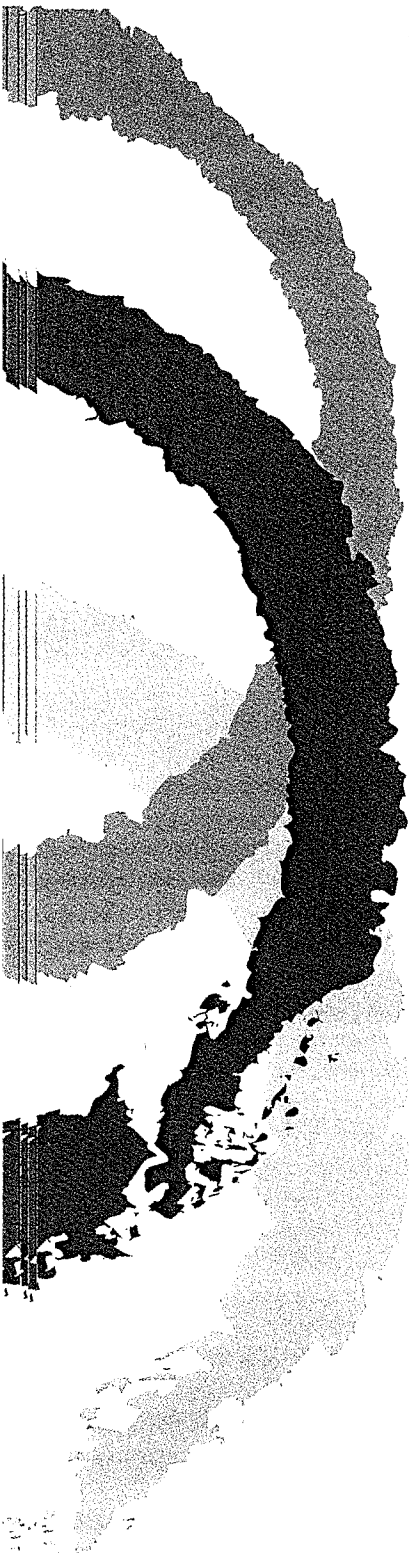
- ◆ encourage middle school students to consider careers in education, and will create high school and college recruitment strategies;
- ◆ support honors programs in teacher preparation at UVM and the state colleges;
- ◆ help strengthen Professional Development Schools (see above);
- ◆ connect and support Teach Vermont fellows through regional and statewide electronic and personal networks;
- ◆ combine state, local, and private funding to provide financial incentives such as scholarships, stipends, and loan forgiveness; and
- ◆ encourage current principals and superintendents to nominate prospective leaders for participation.

(For more information on the educator quality initiative, please refer to *Appendix A*.)



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## B. Meeting the Need for Special Education Teachers

### *An Innovative, Regional Approach to Workforce Development*

Communities all over Vermont need special educators, or will need them in the near future. A nationwide shortage of these teachers has begun to be felt here: last year the state teacher-licensing office approved 53 waivers, permitting public-school personnel without the proper special education credentials to work as special education teachers.

Yet UVM and the Vermont State Colleges have insufficient capacity, at present, to encourage and educate the numbers of special educators that Vermont communities are going to require in the coming years. The need is greatest in the more rural areas that have limited access to higher education.

As directed by Act 117, a new collaboration is underway among the Department of Education, UVM, and VSC, along with private Vermont colleges as they may choose to participate. The participants will design a system to bring the training and development of special educators — leading to and including the master's degree — *into communities* in rural areas, where these efforts can most effectively meet local needs.

Act 117 requires the creation of a higher-education partnership, to deal with both general- and special-educator quality and availability. This initiative is the Partnership's response, together with the efforts detailed in the preceding section.

### **Regional Access; Incentives to Continue**

Strategic planning is well underway for the Higher Education Collaborative to Increase the Numbers of Special Education Teachers. Administrators from the institutions are developing the needed agreements for cooperation. Higher-education faculty and special educators from the field are working on curriculum and instruction.

The Collaborative aims to offer teacher-preparation courses at regional sites around Vermont. This program will be open to classroom teachers, paraprofessionals with a teaching degree, licensed teachers working outside the classroom, and others who hold a bachelor's degree in liberal arts and sciences.

Participants will complete a stipulated number of coursework hours, and a supervised internship. This, combined with an undergraduate education, will qualify the graduate for a special-education teaching license. Incentives for participation will include reduced tuition, stipends, and locally provided training opportunities.

Graduates will also be encouraged to continue their studies to earn a master's of education degree. Each student involved with this collaborative will complete an Individual Professional Development Plan, with a strategy for continuing development in a specific area of expertise in special education. The collaborative is looking into providing incentives for professionals who commit to working for at least two years as a special educator in Vermont.

### **Getting Three Pilots Underway**

Although this statewide collaboration on meeting workforce needs in special education is unique to Vermont, the field-based approach has a record of success here. Previous efforts have included UVM's grant-funded distance-learning programs in special education, and Trinity College's field-based master's program in education and community mental health.

The Collaborative is not creating new curriculum or new programs; instead it is leveraging existing coursework and faculty resources, in ways that can meet the needs of communities where access to higher education has been limited.

The first year of the Collaborative will create pilot programs in three locations. Common to each will be the program's field-based design, the use of a cohort model and of core faculty, the transferability of credits within the participating institutions, and a common tuition rate. In other respects, each pilot will be specifically adapted to meet local and regional needs, and to field-test new methods of delivery. This chance to try out new approaches, and test variables,

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will give the overall project a much greater likelihood of long-term success.

All three primary collaborators are committed to making sure that this effort does, in fact, succeed — and to beginning the pilot projects not later than autumn 2001.

## C. Developing a Statewide Policy on Dual Enrollment

### *Increasing Access to College-Level Learning*

Every year at Peoples Academy, the 350-student high school in Morrisville, there are several students for whom Phil Lovely, the school's energetic director of guidance, would like to find a college-level course.

"There's the junior who has a solid work ethic in the classroom, and might be seeking a different kind of challenge," Lovely says. "He might want to take a theater, music-theory, or computer-application course that Peoples doesn't offer. There's the senior who has outstripped the curriculum, having taken AP calculus as a junior. She needs Calculus II at the college level.

"There's also the 15-year-old girl who's on the verge of dropping out," the guidance director adds. "She sees high school as irrelevant. In a college class, she'd be learning with people who are there by choice — who have given up other things to make their education happen. She might suddenly see new value to learning."

The main trouble is money. As a high-quality but small school in a rural, economically struggling area, Peoples Academy can't afford the typical \$400-\$600 fee for each college course.

To make college-level learning more accessible for high-school students who need it most across Vermont, the Partnership proposes the development of a statewide policy on dual enrollment. This would include consistent agreements on eligibility, responsibility for payment, and the awarding and transfer of credit.

### **Innovating on a Common Theme**

Vermont would hardly be alone in this effort — but in one key respect, our approach would be unique. Thirty-one U.S. states now offer comprehensive or limited dual-enrollment programs, according to a 2000 report by the Education Commission of the States. But, apparently alone among all states, Vermont should work to make dual enrollment more accessible for *two* types of high school student:

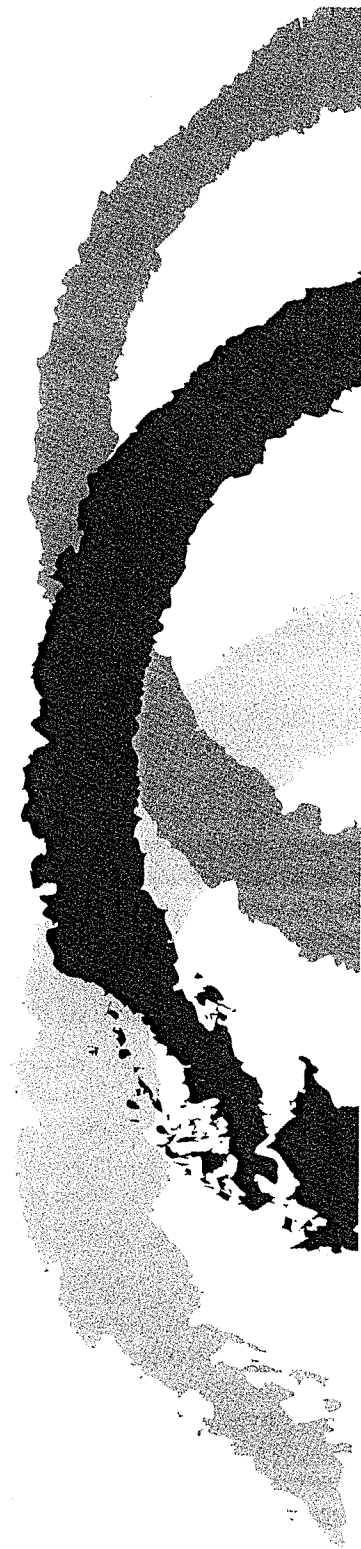
- ◆ the highly accomplished and motivated student who has no access to, or has run out of, advanced-placement or upper-level courses at his/her high school; and, uniquely,
- ◆ the student for whom an alternative learning opportunity might be more productive than anything the high school can offer.

There is good reason to provide alternative learning models. Vermont's high school dropout rate continues to be a great concern. One in seven Vermont males between the ages of 18-22 is now in state custody or supervision. Ninety-five percent of young Vermonters in custody have no high school diploma.


For students with either advanced or alternative needs, dual enrollment can open and speed the path to college. During 1999-2000, the Community College of Vermont's 12 sites served 210 high-school students and others under 18. Sixty to 70 percent successfully completed their courses, a rate similar to adult college students nationwide.

### **Bridging Hurdles to Access**

Initiatives are underway in this area around Vermont, but without a unifying effort to bridge hurdles to more consistent access. At present, Vermont high-school students can only access college-level work if they live close to a college that offers this option, if they can afford the fees, and if they can meet the college's particular enrollment criteria. Some high schoolers can



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take courses at nearby colleges without cost; some high schools and neighboring colleges split course fees equally between the student and the two schools. Other students must pay full tuition.

The Partnership proposes a statewide policy on dual enrollment for advanced high school students — and a pilot study on dual enrollment for students needing alternative options.

### **Seeking Policy Changes**

As a key piece of the dual-enrollment project, the Partnership requests legislative support for school districts to pay postsecondary institutions one twelfth of the state block grant per course, for up to two courses per year. VSC and UVM will cover the remaining costs through tuition waivers or scholarships.

The Partnership is also developing a plan to establish an articulation agreement among UVM, VSC, and all Vermont public and approved independent high schools that choose to adopt this agreement. The goal is to ensure that dual-enrollment credit can be applied to both high school graduation and the postsecondary institution where it is earned.

A number of high schools have already defined similar agreements; the Partnership's goal is to achieve statewide access. The VSC will continue to invest in supporting the pilot study on dual enrollment for students needing alternative options, while also seeking foundation and external support.

The time for this initiative is right. Even as debate about its mechanics continue, Act 60's emphasis on equal educational access has won wide acceptance. School action planning has placed new focus on the needs to challenge higher-achieving students, and to motivate those who have become disengaged. And the development of a dual-enrollment policy was on the short list of recommendations made in June 2000 by the High School Task Force, a statewide group charged by the State Board of Education with addressing critical issues that face Vermont's high schools.

Offering high-school students an exciting, individualized range of learning options means expanding those options, and offering the chance to learn outside the school. Where better to go than college?

(For more information on the dual enrollment initiative, please refer to *Appendix B*.)

## **D. Creating a Distance Learning Consortium**

### *Opening New Worlds of Access and Opportunity*

The potential for distance learning in Vermont is almost limitless — and many of the pieces are already in place. On-line college courses, interactive video seminars, and information-sharing networks are creating educational opportunities that many Vermonters of the past, even the recent past, could never have accessed. It is a powerful new world, full of constantly emerging new ways to teach and learn.

What is most needed now is to create a Vermont Distance Learning Consortium. Like similar projects that are taking shape or being considered in virtually every other state, this Consortium would do strategic planning, coordinate technological linkages, and develop distance-learning programs to connect higher education, high schools, communities, businesses, and other institutions all across the state. It would benefit students at all levels. In fact, it can benefit Vermonters of just about every age and situation.

The first goal of the statewide Distance Learning Consortium will be to make sure that existing networks are interconnected to the greatest extent possible. The Consortium can also fill current gaps and plan for future development, coordinating the most effective ways to bring education and training wherever it is needed, regardless of old-fashioned barriers.

The Consortium will interconnect and leverage the educational expertise and technological resources of the University of Vermont, the five Vermont State Colleges, the Department of Education, Vermont Interactive Television, and the state's 58 high schools. Each member will

support the organizational efforts of the others, leveraging all resources to the greatest extent possible.

UVM and the state college system are currently investing in the startup of this Consortium, in linking existing networks (see next section), and in developing one-stop, Web-based access to VSC and UVM on-line catalogs and registration.

To continue and expand the Consortium's work, next year the Partnership expects to make significant requests for funding from federal, state, and other sources in fiscal 2003. This will be accompanied by a more detailed public-policy agenda for distance learning statewide.

## **A New Opportunity**

For Vermont's whole history, until today, geographic and economic differences across the state and among its people have been both the causes and the long-term results of inequities in educational access. Today, too, the constantly changing nature of the global economy, the constant evolution of technology, and the constant expansion of knowledge all make it essential that people who wish to succeed and live productively have flexible, powerful access to current learning and knowledge.

For the past decade or so, distance-learning and information-sharing networks and systems have been developing across Vermont. These systems now include UVM's distance learning network, the on-line courses offered by UVM and VSC, Vermont Interactive Television, and Vermont's Interactive Learning Network (ILN), a new effort that is using funds from Verizon and others to connect every Vermont high school in a high-speed audio and video network — and deliver high-quality instruction on the network.

The power and potential of these systems will expand hugely if they can be interlinked by an overall planning and connectivity project. Vermont's distance-learning capacity also can, and should, be connected to similar systems that have been developed by other entities within the state, such as state government and health-care providers.

## **The Impacts and Benefits**

The Distance Learning Consortium can make the most of the major investments Vermont has already made in distance learning systems, while also developing a business strategy for ongoing planning and operations.

The Consortium's priorities will be to develop programs and services that address areas of greatest need: for example, high schools that can't now afford to offer Advanced Placement courses; professional development for teachers; and meeting health-care shortages such as nursing, and business needs such as expertise in information technology. The Consortium would coordinate programming and service delivery, develop a joint strategy for preK-20 distance learning, and build collaborative approaches to acquisition and management.

At first, the target audiences will include high-needs areas in K-16 education, in the health professions, in adult literacy, in AP offerings to underserved populations, and in economic development. Long-term, the possible beneficiaries include almost every possible audience: pre-kindergarten children and their parents; students from kindergarten through college; adults doing basic literacy and professional development, and post-graduate learners accessing continuing education; professional groups offering programs to members; businesses and communities providing training, mentoring and solution-sharing; and elders and retirees sharing a rich new range of learning opportunities.

This is the beginning of something that may truly be revolutionary in scope, impact, and potential. Indeed, once the Consortium and its linkages are fully in place, the talk about technology — and the longstanding barriers to education's many positive impacts — may begin fading into the background of a new era, in which learning truly has no boundaries.

(For more information on the distance learning initiative, please refer to *Appendix C*.)



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## II. ADDITIONAL AREAS OF PARTNERSHIP

### A. PreK-20 Alignment

At a 1999 meeting of the national K-16 state systems meeting, hosted by the National Association of Systems Heads and the Education Trust, a team of 18 Vermont educators focused on strategies for aligning all of Vermont public education, from kindergarten through college.

The Vermont team recommended a series of key actions to achieve alignment through all levels of public education, from pre-kindergarten through graduate levels — especially focusing on the key transition between high school and college. These goals and recommendations have since been incorporated into the work of the Partnership's preK-20 alignment project — as have, to a more limited extent, the recommendations of the High School Task Force, which the State Board of Education created to develop strategies for strengthening Vermont high schools.

This project has set out four goals:

- a. Establish ownership and oversight of Vermont's alignment agenda.
- b. Align high-school exit and post-secondary admissions requirements.
- c. Establish a statewide dual-enrollment policy and system.
- d. Incorporate post-secondary data into preK-20 assessment framework.

#### 1. Longitudinal Tracking

What happens to Vermont high school students who apply and are admitted to UVM and the Vermont State Colleges? Knowing some solid answers to this question can help Vermont high schools better prepare students for college, especially in-state.

The Partnership has overseen preliminary design for a Vermont High School Longitudinal Study. The study, whose first report is due in March 2001, aims to answer these basic questions:

- ◆ What proportion of in-state high school graduates applied and were admitted to Vermont public higher education from 1995-96 through 2000-2001?
- ◆ What was the academic profile of each entering class of Vermonters (as measured through class rank, SAT scores, etc.)?
- ◆ How did each class perform in college academics (gauged by grade point averages, performance in math and English courses, comparisons with out-of-state peers, retention rates, and other available measures)?
- ◆ How often did in-state students need remedial work at the college level?
- ◆ How has a random selection of 1999 and 2000 high school graduates performed in college, in the job market, in personal satisfaction with their preparation in high school?

## 2. Standards-Based High School Transcripts

A key piece of preK-20 alignment is making sure that Vermont high school transcripts truly reflect our state's new expectations of students — so that our colleges can also know what to expect, and so colleges and high schools in Vermont can communicate more productively about meeting student needs.

The Partnership is planning a work session on the development of standards-based high school transcripts. The goal is to develop five or six prototypes of transcripts based on the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, for possible use by Vermont high schools and colleges.

## B. Responding to the Shortage of Nurses

At a time when Vermont needs more and more nurses, we are educating fewer. If we are to reverse a deepening shortage of these vital health-care professionals, educational strategies must play a central role.

Reflecting a nationwide trend, Vermont colleges graduated 31 percent fewer registered nurses in 1999 than in 1995. In 1997, only 28 percent of Vermont RNs were under 40 years old. And from 1992-98, the RN vacancy rate in Vermont increased by 34 percent.

By 2000, the nursing shortage had created almost 500 vacancies in Vermont for registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and licensed nursing assistants.

This situation is outlined in the April 2000 report *A Call to Action: Addressing Vermont's Nursing Shortage*, from which the above statistics are drawn. The report was prepared by the Blue Ribbon Nursing Commission, whose membership was appointed by Jane Kitchel, Vermont Secretary of Human Services. The Commission chair was Robert Clarke, Chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges.

This section summarizes the findings — and the recommendations — presented by Secretary Kitchel's Blue Ribbon Nursing Commission:

### Findings: Shortfall, Stress & Need

As our population ages, and as hospitals focus inpatient services on more acutely ill patients, the demand for qualified nurses is growing in hospitals, home health agencies, and nursing homes across the state. In fact, nurses are increasingly needed in all sectors of health care, the second largest industry in Vermont.

But fewer people are entering nursing education. Potential nurses today are often discouraged by one or more of three key factors:

- ◆ stagnant wages in the field,
- ◆ rising stresses and paperwork in many nursing jobs, and
- ◆ the unusually high indebtedness that now awaits many nursing graduates.

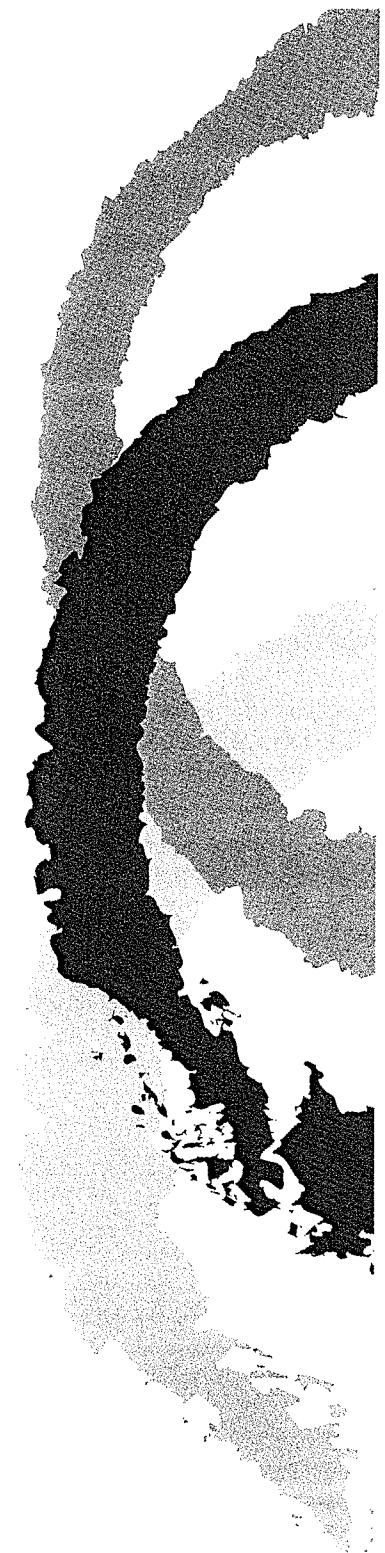
According to *A Call to Action*, today's typical BSN graduate from UVM will carry a debt of almost \$26,500. This is well above the average indebtedness of graduates in other academic programs — and it requires that a newly minted nurse set aside 17 percent of an average, entry-level take-home salary for loan payments. Most providers of student loans recommend that monthly payments not exceed 8 percent of a person's monthly income.

### Three Recommendations from the Kitchel Commission

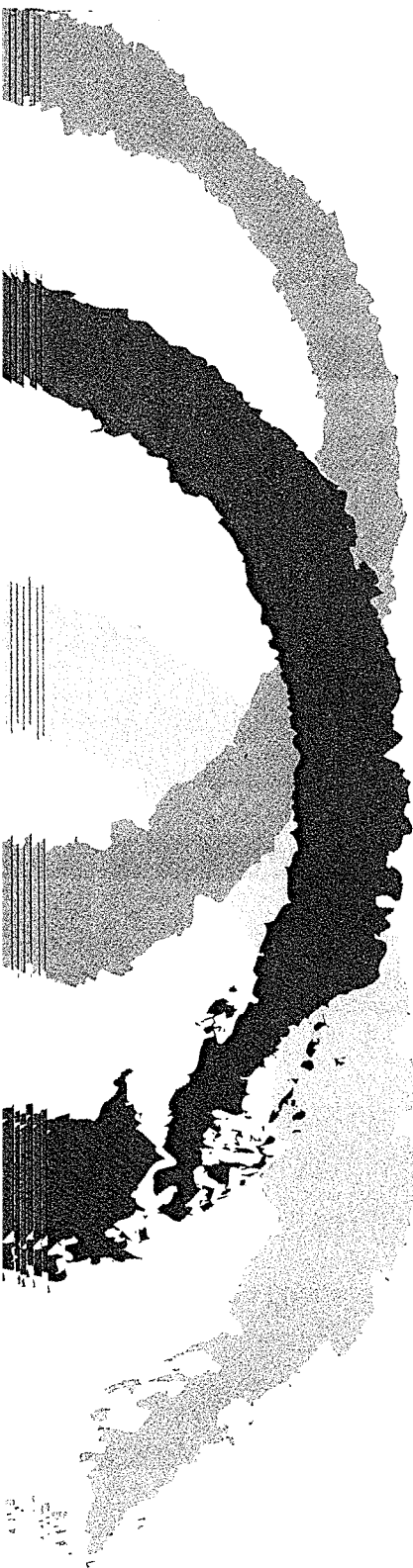
The Blue Ribbon Commission on Nursing urged that Vermont:

1. **Create a Center for Nursing at the University of Vermont, in collaboration with the Vermont State Colleges.**

Such a Center can collect data, analyze trends, propose long-term strategies to meet the need



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for nurses, guide efforts to recruit and retain nurses in Vermont, help develop leaders in the field, and provide a focal point for research and education.

**2. Establish a state-funded Vermont Nursing Education Loan Forgiveness Program.**

The vast majority of students in Vermont nursing programs are Vermonters — yet 50 percent of UVM nursing graduates now live out of state. This program would link loan forgiveness to a nurse's agreement to practice in Vermont for a specified period.

**3. Develop an aggressive fundraising effort to raise private dollars for scholarship support.**

**4. Fund a comprehensive marketing program for the nursing profession, as a partnership among the state, educators, and health care providers.**

Nursing is an exciting and meaningful profession with many rewards, growing job options, and a wide array of career-advancement opportunities. This marketing campaign can make these attractions known, can counter some current stereotypes about nursing, and can focus on attracting more men and minorities to the profession.

**5. Increase state funding to expand nursing continuing-education programs.**

This action would permit UVM and the Vermont State Colleges to comprehensively assess learning needs for nurses in all professional settings. It would also enable the development of more short-term, distance-learning courses for working nurses; and it would provide funding to prepare nurses for work in specialized settings.

**6. Expand the capacity of nursing education programs — in part to develop a new supply of nursing educators.**

In recent years, declining enrollments and budget reductions have markedly reduced the number of faculty in Vermont's nursing education programs. As nursing grows more specialized and sophisticated, qualified educators are often attracted to better-paying careers in the profession. It is time for the state to invest in reversing this trend.

**7. Increase nurses' salaries, to retain and attract qualified professionals.**

Hospital RN nurse wages have seen no real growth since 1992. Salaries must improve, and must reflect educational attainment.



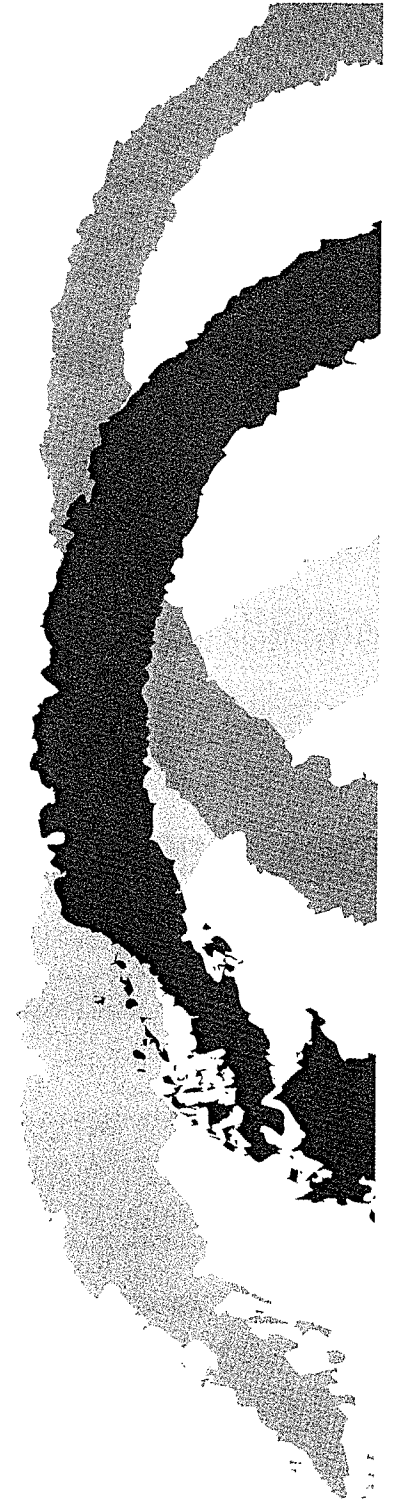
## C. Workforce Education and Training Collaboration

The members of this effort have committed to working together, on a continuing basis, to help Vermont businesses meet all their current and future needs in workforce education and training, at all levels of skills.

In a first-time collaboration of all its members, this group includes the public-education partners along with the Vermont Department of Employment and Training, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and the Human Resources Investment Council.

At its first planning session, the group set out five key areas for its work. During the upcoming sessions, members will develop a public policy agenda for each of these:

- 1. Education, Training & Services for Targeted Groups.** At present, these groups include college dropouts and the underemployed.
- 2. Small Business Education and Training Consortia.** These would involve clusters of companies with common education and training needs, aimed at building common infrastructures to meet these needs, and at bridging barriers to geographic access.
- 3. Data Collection and Analysis.** Priorities here include real-time analysis and assessment of training and education needs; integration of systems among the members; and measures for ensuring accountability.
- 4. New Program Development.** These may target a post-secondary system of vocational education; a program for alternative apprenticeships; alternative high school programming; recruitment and training (for example, in nursing, special education, and information technology), and supervisory training.
- 5. Funding.**



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## III. RELATED AND FUTURE INITIATIVES

Below are initiatives that the Partnership plans on adding to its agenda in the coming months. These are all important issues that many Vermont people and organizations are currently working on, to which the partners intent to lend their support.

### A. Adult Essential Skills

Because adult Vermonters now need more than just reading, writing, and basic math to function and succeed in today's world, the concept of adult literacy has expanded to adult *essential skills* — including problem-solving, higher-order thinking, working with others, and using computers. There is a major gap between the size of this need and Vermont's current network for providing critical services.

What is now termed the Adult Essential Skills network primarily involves Vermont Adult Basic Education (ABE), which is funded from state and federal sources and provides its services through non-profit organizations. This network now serves about 6,000 adult learners each year — yet an estimated 80,000 Vermont adults do not have the essential skills they need. This population also tends to need other social and vocational services as well.

Interagency efforts will be important to achieve the full range of services adults need to achieve essential skills. An interagency literacy protocol has been drafted, and will be implemented in July. This will result in more clients of state employment, human-service, and vocational rehabilitation agencies being assessed, and their literacy barriers to employment identified.

The recent report by a Vermont legislative study group on adult essential skills, convened by the State Board of Education and chaired by State Senator Barbara Snelling, calls for a coherent statewide system of Adult Essential Skills services. The Commissioner of Education is to report the findings of this effort to the General Assembly by this coming January 31.

### B. School to Work

The goal of the statewide school-to-work initiative has been to ensure that all Vermont students graduate high school prepared to move successfully into either higher education or employment, prepared and equipped for lifelong success. What is most needed now is a continuing effort to support this initiative, whose primary federal funding has run out.

Supported by \$12 million in federal seed money over the past five years, the Vermont school-to-work effort created 14 new regional partnerships. Each has focused on helping students meet the state's educational standards with innovative projects and opportunities in work-based learning, career exploration, and applied academics. These partnerships have brought together employers, educators, parents, students, and community members. In 1999, school-to-work efforts provided Vermont students with more than 100,000 learning opportunities — including job shadowing, mentoring, career guidance, employer presentations, workplace visits, and career planning.

To continue this work, at least 50 positions had been funded at Vermont high schools this fall, by \$2 million in local dollars. Some regional partnerships are continuing, often as Workforce Investment Boards. Youth Councils in many regions are integrating current efforts and resources. But local budget pressures often strain school-to-work efforts, sometimes leading to cutbacks.

The most effective school-to-work efforts involve articulation agreements, such as those between high schools and colleges, and are oriented toward helping all students prepare for careers and the world of work. Since data provide the foundation for educational change, it is important to continue the data-gathering efforts begun in the school-to-work initiative. One appropriate place to continue this work is through the continuing efforts to renew and improve Vermont high schools.

## C. Early Childhood Education

As research shows how vital the prekindergarten years are for brain development and early learning, early education is moving toward the forefront of discussions among education leaders. Surveys among Vermont kindergarten teachers consistently find that about one in four children are entering school unprepared to succeed. People are recognizing that it is often feasible and far cheaper to prevent major learning difficulties, with intervention before kindergarten, than to remediate their many educational, social, and emotional impacts throughout a student's school career and later life.

Over the past two years, a research partnership largely focusing on early learning has been developed among the Department of Education, UVM, and the Agency of Human Services. This initiative has surveyed the field to identify both effective practices and the areas where practitioners need more research and support. It has not yet begun to seek major grant or other external support.

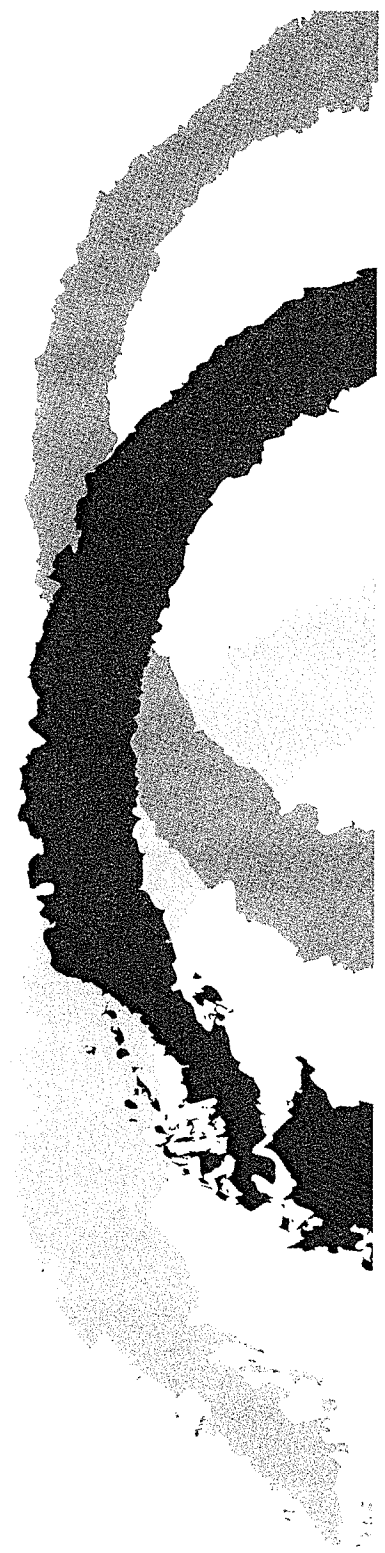
Many Vermont preschoolers lack access to a quality early learning experience. Too often, young children are placed in programs with adults who lack formal training in child development or early education. Vermont needs to look seriously at how to attract people into this essential field, prepare them professionally, and provide career opportunities; many providers today earn minimum wage or even less, in a great variety of working conditions.

Some headway has been made. The Early Childhood Steering Committee, a collaboration among key state agencies and community groups, has finalized some benchmarks as guides toward achieving desired outcomes. And a service agreement on working toward these outcomes has been signed by the Governor and by representatives of state agencies, higher education, and the provider community.

## D. Paraeducator Education and Training

Vermont now has about half as many paraeducators as teachers. Over the last two years, UVM and the Community College of Vermont have been working together to deliver a curriculum of brief, one-credit courses that can be taken singly or as a unit — moving toward a credit-bearing certificate on the paraprofessional in the classroom. This is applied knowledge delivered in a classroom format, and is useful both in itself and in encouraging the paraprofessional to consider a college degree with an education major. So far, the project has worked in a number of Vermont towns, including Milton and Danville.

Each initiative that the Partnership takes on seeks to build on ideas and advances that have been tested in Vermont schools, communities, and regions. And each seeks, in the end, to benefit individual Vermonters in all regions of the state.



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## Appendix A.

# EDUCATOR QUALITY

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND PROGRAM INITIATIVES

### Support Vermont Commission on Educator Quality

We support the establishment of the Vermont Commission on Educator Quality and commit executive leadership to its membership. The Commission, convened by the Governor and Commissioner of Education, will maintain progress on the implementation of a series of initiatives aimed at strengthening educator quality in Vermont through the development of a statewide system of educator preparation and professional development. The Commission's agenda will reflect the state policy recommendations of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, as well as the unique joint ventures of the Vermont Public Education Partnership.

### Expand Professional Development School Model

Currently, there are 6-8 professional development schools in Vermont, depending on the criteria used to define them. They are not located to provide equitable access by region or statewide, which means that the majority of Vermont's pre-service and current teachers and school leaders do not have the opportunity to participate. Professional development schools are widely regarded as one of the most effective ways to simultaneously prepare new teachers, facilitate growth and development for current educators, and improve learning outcomes for all students. The goals, activities, and needs related to expanding this model follow.

#### Goals:

1. Support and extend regional professional development school hubs/models to provide regional access for all Vermont pre-service and in-service educators.
2. Model best practices in teacher education.
3. Provide high-quality professional development and support for National Board certification.
4. Support leadership development and pathways for school leadership.
5. Support data-based inquiry and action planning for school improvement.

#### Activities:

1. pre-service teacher education: courses and internships
2. mentoring/peer assistance for practicing teachers and leaders, including voc-tech
3. K16 arts/sciences collaboration
4. action research collaboration
5. site-based professional development
6. grades 7-12 educator recruitment activities
7. curricular/professional pathways from teacher to school leader

#### Staffing Needs:

1. Site coordinator
2. K12 faculty leader(s)
3. college faculty leader(s)

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### Planning Needs:

1. budget model
2. prototype memorandum of understanding between college(s) and school(s)
3. alternative delivery/distance learning model
4. additional funding to address capacity issues (particularly given end of Goals 2000 funding)

### Establish "Teach Vermont" and "Lead Vermont" Programs

Many states and districts have established incentive programs to address teacher shortages (e.g., Connecticut, New York City) by providing new forms of financial and professional support to prospective teachers. The increasing number of waivers approved in lieu of teacher certification and the decreasing number of young people interested in careers in education both point to the need for a similar strategy in Vermont. We propose the development of "Teach Vermont" and "Lead Vermont" to increase the number of caring, competent educators in our schools.

### Needs Addressed:

1. recruitment strategies/incentives for teachers and school leaders
2. local/regional access to quality preparation and professional development.
3. ongoing colleague support
4. established pathways to teaching and school leadership

### Components:

#### 1. recruitment:

- ◆ create high school and college recruitment strategies for Teach Vermont
- ◆ support teacher preparation honors programs at UVM, CSC, JSC and LSC
- ◆ create full "cohort experience" for Teach Vermont and Lead Vermont fellows, including regional and statewide networks, face-to-face and electronic linkages
- ◆ current superintendents/principals nominate prospective leaders for participation in Lead Vermont (possibly including those currently on waivers)
- ◆ combination of state, local and private funding provides financial incentives to pre-service and leadership cohorts (e.g., loan forgiveness, stipends, scholarships)
- ◆ establish partnership with VSAC to process loan forgiveness and scholarship programs to support new teachers/leaders
- ◆ strengthen Peer Review as recruiting mechanism to encourage skilled/talented adults in other professions to enter the teaching field

#### 2. access to quality preparation and professional development:

- ◆ higher education consortium to develop new offerings and delivery modes
- ◆ additional higher education faculty to serve colleges and schools
- ◆ new roles for veteran/lead teachers in professional development
- ◆ partnerships to engage in applied research toward school improvement
- ◆ Professional Development Schools strengthened/expanded to support Teach Vermont and Lead Vermont

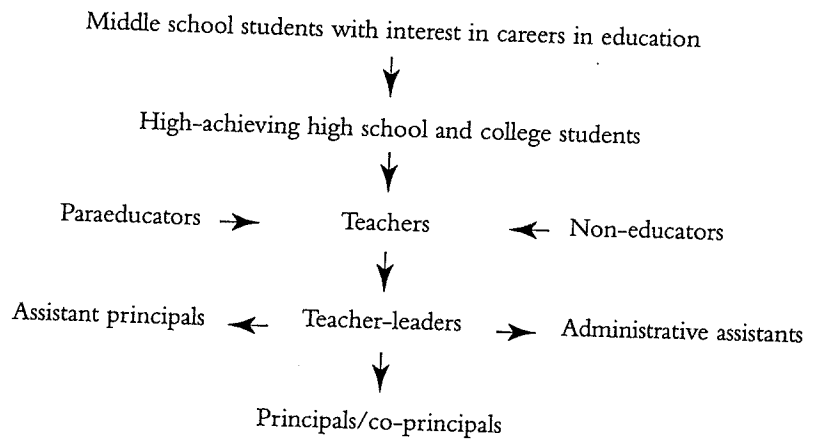
#### 3. ongoing colleague support to complement work of Vermont Educational Leadership Alliance:

- ◆ Teach Vermont networks established/maintained
- ◆ Lead Vermont networks established/maintained
- ◆ Professional Development Schools strengthened/expanded to support Teach Vermont and Lead Vermont



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4. *establish pathways to teaching and educational leadership:*
- ◆ planning group designs statewide education and support structure to provide clear career pathways for:



### **Next Steps**

1. Convene planning session to expand professional development school model.
2. Research and assess national incentive/recruitment strategies for effectiveness.
3. Develop funding proposals/requests for Professional Development School model.
4. Convene planning session for Teach Vermont and Lead Vermont.
5. Develop funding proposals to support Teach Vermont and Lead Vermont.

# DUAL ENROLLMENT

## POLICY PERSPECTIVES

### Background: Why Dual Enrollment?

Dual enrollment programs allow high school students to simultaneously earn credit toward high school graduation and a college degree. Such programs provide challenging curricular options and an accelerated opportunity for qualified high school students to earn college credit, thus saving them time and money as well as presenting educational opportunities not available at their local high school. Dual enrollment programs are further intended to smooth the transition between secondary and postsecondary education, and to symbolize a commitment to equity of opportunity and access. Finally, dual enrollment programs offer an alternative learning opportunity, often outside the school building, which can be particularly effective in helping high schools address the multiple learning styles and diverse motivations of their students.

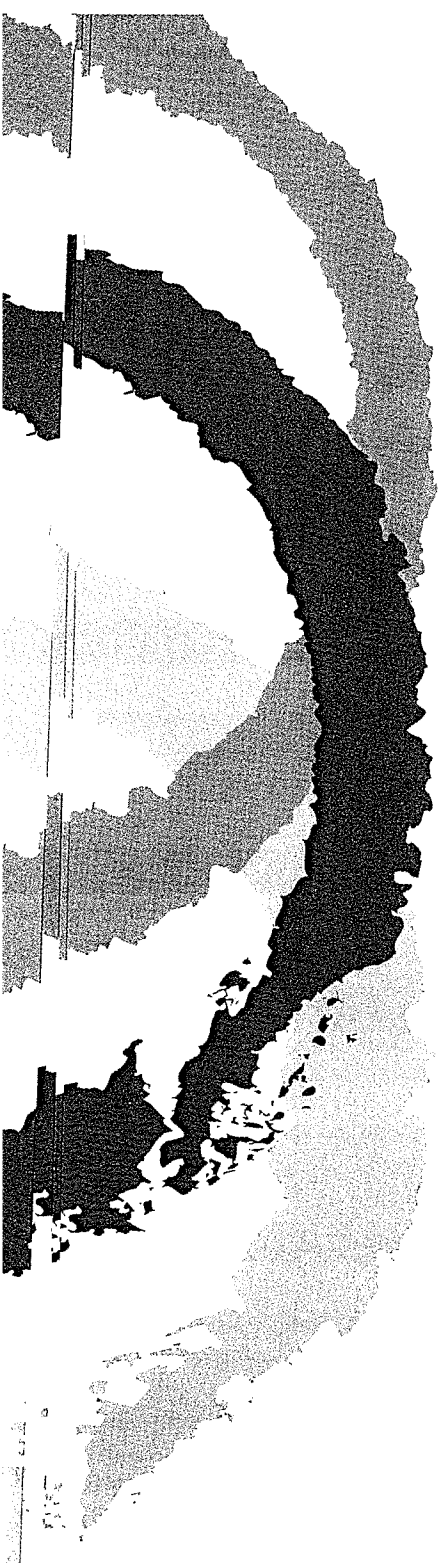
Advanced placement courses provide such an opportunity for higher-achieving students only in those high schools with sufficient instructional resources and advanced placement enrollment to warrant such offerings. Even for this rather common form of dual enrollment, local priorities and socioeconomic factors tend to limit options even for the highest-achieving students (e.g., some schools pay the costs of the advanced placement tests; in others, students pay). Students with low to moderate levels of achievement typically have not had the opportunity to obtain college-level work in high school. These inequities of opportunity at all levels of achievement often result in diminished aspirations and disincentives for adolescents to fully develop their talents — the economic, social, and intellectual cost of which is significant.

In Vermont, the political climate is right for developing a statewide policy on dual enrollment as a number of educational and political forces converge:

- ◆ Act 60 emphasizes “equal access to educational opportunity” and “school quality standards,” begging the question of why high school students’ access to postsecondary education is dependent on where they live and how much they or their school district can afford to pay.
- ◆ Staying in high school makes a difference. Vermont’s high school dropout rate continues to be a cause of major concern, particularly since we know that over 60 percent of the entire Vermont prison population does not have a high school diploma. Even more troubling, one of every seven Vermont males between the ages of 18–22 is under the custody or supervision of the Department of Corrections, and 95 percent of those young people in custody do not have high school diplomas. We must find ways to engage and motivate all students.
- ◆ Going to college makes difference. Skills and knowledge that supported Vermont’s economy in the past will not suffice in a technology-driven future. Further, it is clear that the income gap between those who have only a high school diploma and those who have college degrees continues to widen, affecting not only personal development but also tax and charitable contributions and reliance on public assistance. Vermont’s college continuation rate, measured by those high school graduates who are enrolled in college one year after graduation, is below the national average—nominally if measured by VSAC’s Follow-up Survey (in 1998, 63.4% for Vermonters and 65.6% nationally), but



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significantly as documented in national publications such as *Postsecondary Education Opportunity* (in 1998, 49.8% for Vermonters and 57.2% nationally).

- ◆ Going to college immediately after high school increases the likelihood of earning a college degree. CCV's experience indicates that once students separate from high school with no immediate plans for college, they may wait 8-15 years to enter postsecondary education. Nationally, students who attend college directly after high school, even if they don't finish at that time, are much more likely to earn a college degree in their lifetime than those who do not attend directly after high school.
- ◆ In some areas of the state, growing populations of new Americans are creating demands for new services. High school graduates in these populations are often motivated and intellectually ready to attend college, but have significant deficits in language skills that impede their potential for success. High school ESL programs do not bring them to the level required for college success; yet once granted a high school degree, their access to Adult Basic Education services may be limited.
- ◆ School action planning has placed renewed focus on both the need to challenge higher-achieving students and the need to motivate the "psychological dropout" — those for whom high school feels like prolonged seat time rather than a place to learn and grow. Many high schools have identified "increasing postsecondary aspirations" and "increasing challenging and relevant learning opportunities" as primary action planning goals.
- ◆ The High School Task Force, a statewide group charged by the State Board of Education to address critical issues facing high schools, submitted its initial report in June 2000. On its short list of preliminary recommendations, the Task Force asked the State Board and Department of Education to support the establishment of a statewide dual enrollment policy.
- ◆ As school choice gains currency, high school access to appropriate postsecondary learning becomes an important component of the "menu" of programs and services from which students can design their individualized learning experiences. The statewide high school reform initiative supports the expanded use of personal learning plans to employ resources from outside the school to meet the diverse learning needs and developmental interests of all students.

## National Models

According to the 2000 *School Choice: State Actions* report by the Education Commission of the States, 17 states offer comprehensive dual enrollment programs at minimal or no cost to students, and with few course or eligibility restrictions, whereby credit received applies toward both high school graduation and postsecondary institutions. Fourteen other states offer limited programs that require students to pay the costs of postsecondary courses, and place restrictions on course eligibility and credit accumulation. Twenty-one states, including Vermont, have no formal policies related to dual enrollment (the total count includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico).

In addition to these statewide models, there are innumerable institution-specific programs, including those considered leaders in the field — such as Project Advance at Syracuse University, the Advance College Project at Indiana University, and New York's LaGuardia Community College Middle College program, which by 1998 had been replicated at 31 sites nationwide.

Across all cases, variability is the constant. Tuition payment procedures vary, from the student paying to the school district paying to the college absorbing the cost of enrollment. In one local model, businesses pay for specified courses. Admissions processes vary, from highly restricted to open access. Location varies, from in the high school to on the college campus, which has an impact on faculty status.

In cases where courses are taught at the high school during the day, the instructor is usually a member of the high school faculty, often with adjunct faculty status at the college. In cases



where courses are taught on the college campus, the offering is typically part of the regular college curriculum, except in locally developed programs that may include special courses for high school students. Grading procedures vary from local grading to some combination of local and college oversight to college grading. And transferability of credit varies; some colleges will not accept credits if a course is taught at the high school by a high school teacher. A sampling of statewide policy options is provided below.

**SAMPLE DUAL ENROLLMENT POLICY OPTIONS**  
from the *Report of the Education Commission of the States* (1997)

State	Code	Who Pays	Limitations	Credit Received
Colorado	11th and 12th graders may take postsecondary classes to fulfill secondary graduation requirements	School districts pay costs of first two courses per semester, student incurs costs for additional courses	Student should enroll with the "advice and counsel of the principal of a high school"	secondary, unless student enrolls at postsecondary institution where credit was awarded
Florida	Enrollment of eligible secondary student in post-secondary course	State funds both secondary and post-secondary institutions, textbooks provided to students but become property of high school	Courses not available in secondary institution, students must maintain GPA level	Secondary, unless student enrolls at postsecondary institution where credit was awarded
Iowa	Students in grades 10 or 12, or students in grades 9 and 10 who have been identified as gifted	Local district pays up to \$250 if course takes place during school year, student pays if unsuccessful	Only for classes not available with school district, postsecondary institutions can charge no more than \$250, student apply to eligible institutions	Secondary school credit only
Maine	High school students may take post-secondary courses if local school district approves and if accepted by college	School district pays tuition costs, students pay for textbooks and other associated costs	Schools may not limit program to gifted and talented and must provide guidance services	Both secondary and postsecondary
Massachusetts	Dual enrollment policy includes non-public students	Higher Education Coordinating Council establishes per credit costs, Executive Office of Education pays while funds available, schools have option to pay if funds unavailable	Juniors or seniors with 3.0 GPA or better and/or recommended by school staff, must meet admissions requirements, must earn B or better to remain eligible	Both secondary and postsecondary, non-public credit at discretion of school
Ohio	For 11th and 12th graders to attend participating programs approved by the Board of Regents	State pays tuition if credits apply toward secondary diploma (student pays if course doesn't qualify), institution pays for texts and supplies, some funding for transportation of low-income students	Determined by participating post-secondary institutions, parents and students must attend counseling	Both secondary and postsecondary
Washington	For 11th and 12th graders	School districts pay tuition, students pay for transportation and books	Students must pass standardized test	Both secondary and postsecondary



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## Vermont Needs

There is no statewide dual enrollment policy in Vermont, so dual enrollment arrangements vary widely by location. High school students' access to postsecondary course work is dependent on proximity to a particular college, ability to pay, and enrollment criteria of the particular institution. Some Vermont high school students have access to postsecondary learning free of charge (e.g., the VAST program at Vermont Technical College, which is supported in part through the Legislature; or specified courses at Middlebury College that are offered free of charge to qualified students as a community service).

Several Vermont high schools and local colleges have made special arrangements whereby tuition costs are split three ways by the high school, the college, and the student. In other places high school students pay a greatly reduced fee (e.g., at Johnson State College and a limited number of Community College of Vermont sites), while others must pay full tuition to attend (e.g., at the University of Vermont). In all cases, agreements about credit equivalencies are made locally, and are often entangled in debates about Carnegie Units and seat time, rather than focused on learning outcomes.

Nationally, most dual enrollment programs serve the top 10% of students, clearly focusing on the advanced placement population. The College Board reports that in 1999, 1,700 Vermont students took 2,506 AP exams, 24% of those exams in English Literature/Composition, 15% in US History, 15% in Biology and 13% in Calculus. According to Vermont Department of Education, some Vermont high schools offer no advanced placement courses, while others offer as many as 13 advanced placement courses in a given semester. Governor Dean has publicly supported increasing the number of advanced placement courses available to students, at least in part through an agreement with Verizon to electronically link all of Vermont's high schools to share course offerings for higher achieving students.

For lower-achieving students, CCV recently has been developing collaborative programming with individual high schools to provide alternatives to traditional high school classes. In addition to enrollment, many of these initiatives provide more intensive than average advising, support, and learning opportunities for these students. In academic year 1999-2000, CCV served 210 students under the age of 18, nearly 2.5% of the entire college enrollment and growing. Its rate of successful course completion is running between 60-70%, a rate similar to adult performance nationwide. A significant number of participants who have completed high school in the last two years have subsequently enrolled in CCV or other college programs — a result of dual enrollment that is common nationwide. Students in the Burlington High School/CCV project (College Connections) reported that their involvement enhanced their career skills and exploration, and strengthened their self-confidence related to attending college as well as their college applications.

CCV has also developed some pre-college courses and workshops aimed specifically at high school students who have below-average skills or other learning barriers, such as English as a second language, first-generation college-bound, or low aspiration. These offerings are designed to introduce students to a college environment and college-level expectations while they work on the basic skills necessary to succeed. Generally these are planned in coordination with a specific high school for a targeted cohort of students. Other high school-aged students, including home-schoolers and out-of-school youth with or without a GED or diploma, attend regular CCV courses with large numbers of adult students.

Funding arrangements for dual enrollment vary widely by CCV's high school partner. Grant funding (e.g., School-to-Work, Dropout Prevention, Nellie Mae), local education funds (e.g., from the Freeman Foundation) or school discretionary funds support many of the programs.

## Statewide Policy Proposal

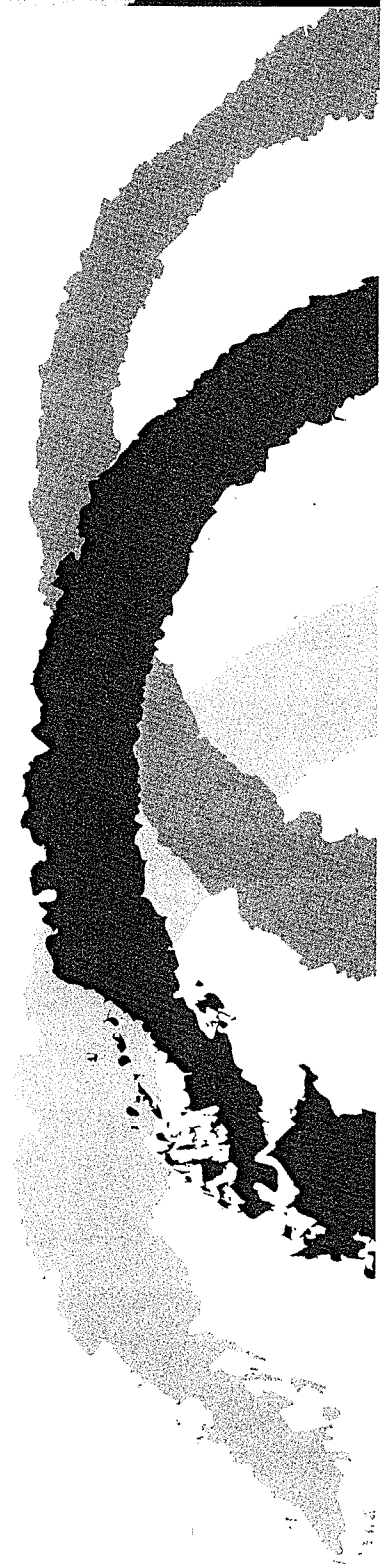
A statewide policy on dual enrollment should address at least three primary components: who is eligible to participate, who pays, and how credit is awarded and transferred. Outside the specific policy statement, there should be clarity about the roles of college and high school faculty, and mechanisms for delivering college courses to underserved high school populations.

Once a policy is drafted, broad support from key constituents must be garnered through a

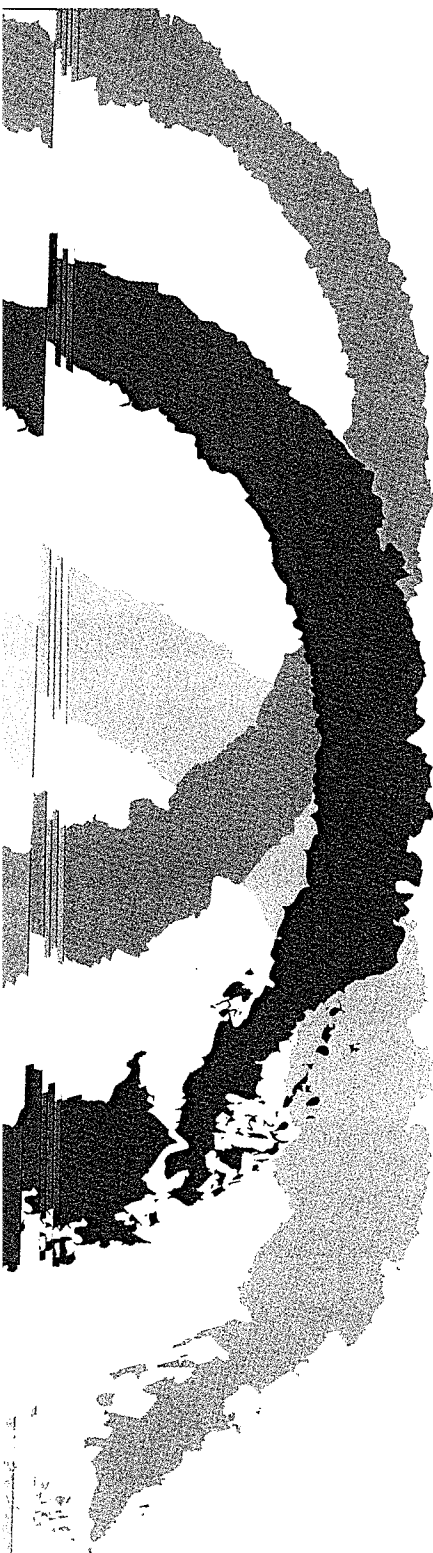
deliberate communications effort to explore the potential benefits (and perceived liabilities) of dual enrollment.

We propose policy approaches to address the needs of two distinct populations: students without access to advanced placement or other challenging upper-level courses (i.e., those students who have “run out of curriculum” at their local high schools) and students for whom alternative learning opportunities might more effectively support their development (i.e., those students whose learning styles and motivations are not a “good fit” with existing approaches in their local high schools). We propose a statewide policy in the first case and a pilot study in the second. In both cases, the policy and its results should be evaluated one and two years after implementation.

Component	Statewide Policy: Dual Enrollment for Advanced Curriculum	Pilot Study: Dual Enrollment for Alternative Learning Opportunities
<b>Eligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high school students in grades 10-12 in any public or approved independent Vermont secondary institution</li> <li>• courses not available in secondary institution</li> <li>• courses at the college-level only (no developmental or remedial courses)</li> <li>• students must receive authorization from school principal (or designee) and must meet the admissions requirements of the eligible post-secondary institution (CCV, CSC, JSC, LSC, VTC, UVM)</li> <li>• college courses will be open to high school students on an “as available” basis</li> <li>• an agreement can be made between a particular high school and college (other than UVM) to deliver a college course at a high school or through distance learning for a specific group of high school students; UVM does provide AP courses through distance learning</li> <li>• for UVM, courses must be open for enrollment of college students and not limited to a selective high school population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high school students in grades 10-12 in selected Vermont secondary institutions targeted for partnership with five CCV hub sites in Burlington, Bennington, Montpelier, Springfield and St. Johnsbury (possible selection criteria for high schools include low-performing schools in need of technical assistance as determined by the State, or those with high drop-out rates, significant poverty rates, or high numbers of first generation college students and/ or new Americans)</li> <li>• courses not available at secondary institution</li> <li>• some courses may be pre-college level (e.g., Introduction to College), which would count toward high school graduation per below</li> <li>• courses must support a student’s personal learning plan or other plan of study designed to meet high school graduation requirements</li> <li>• students must receive authorization from school principal (or designee) and must meet the enrollment requirements of relevant CCV courses</li> </ul>
<b>Cost/Who Pays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for individual courses, school district pays college 1/12th of state block grant per course for up to two courses per year</li> <li>• for full-time students, state transfers student block grant to college</li> <li>• colleges provide tuition discount/ institutional scholarship to cover remaining tuition/ fees</li> <li>• students/ parents responsible for textbook costs (schools may develop local scholarship funds)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for individual courses, school district pays college 1/12th of state block grant per course for up to two courses per year</li> <li>• colleges provide tuition discount/ institutional scholarship to cover remaining tuition/ fees</li> <li>• students/ parents responsible for textbook costs (schools may develop local scholarship funds)</li> <li>• CCV administers pilot study of alternative high school learning opportunities in five regionally-based sites for targeted students; continues to make college investment and seek external funding</li> </ul>



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Component	Statewide Policy: Dual Enrollment for Advanced Curriculum	Pilot Study: Dual Enrollment for Alternative Learning Opportunities
<b>Credit Award/Transfer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>credit earned applies to both high school graduation and postsecondary institution where it is earned; partnership will seek statewide articulation agreement between UVM, VSC and Vt. high schools</li> <li>transfer of credits earned to postsecondary institutions other than that which awarded credit will be based on institutional policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>credit earned applies to both high school graduation and postsecondary institution where it is earned (for college-level courses only)</li> <li>credit earned in pre-college level courses contributes to students meeting/exceeding Vermont Standards/ Vital Results</li> </ul>
<b>Communication Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meet with Education Coalition and other constituents (e.g., VSAC)</li> <li>meet with VHEC</li> <li>link with statewide High School Task Force</li> <li>meet with State Board of Education</li> <li>establish "legislative friends" for sponsorship</li> <li>meet with media</li> <li>report back after one year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meet with pilot sites and regional school representatives</li> <li>link to study of alternative high schools</li> <li>meet with media</li> <li>report back after one year</li> </ul>

### Next Steps

1. Present dual enrollment findings and recommendations to key constituents (e.g., State Board of Education).
2. Request legislative support for school districts to pay postsecondary institutions 1/12th of state block grant per course for up to two courses per year under dual enrollment agreement presented here.
3. Develop a plan to establish an articulation agreement between UVM, VSC and all Vermont public and approved independent high schools to ensure that dual enrollment credit can be applied to both high school graduation and the postsecondary institution where it is earned.
4. Continue to seek external funding for CCV to administer alternative high school model.

## Appendix C.

# DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learning has the potential to maximize the collective resources of VSC, UVM, and Vermont's preK-12 education system. New technologies will provide broader access to programs and services currently limited by geography, organization, and funding. Distance learning also will create new learning environments and learning communities that maximize the interactive benefits of technology-based instruction; address multiple learning styles and needs; and acknowledge the transforming role of the Internet in the "social construction of knowledge," and in changing student/client expectations and "ways of knowing." Distance learning will create new relationships among teachers, students, communities, institutions, and programs, and is likely to require new preK-16 funding and governance models.

In a growing trend nationwide, high school-college partnerships are often facilitated by "virtual universities" that link colleges statewide through consortial relationships to broaden access to courses and programs through distance learning, and to coordinate offerings to address strategic needs and priorities. Frequently, these college/university consortia oversee statewide "virtual high schools" that offer on-line college courses to high school students, typically to provide advanced placement opportunities that are not available through the local high school curriculum. The list of statewide virtual high schools is growing and includes California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and West Virginia.

Care must be taken in the development of both the service and programmatic components of an integrated distance learning system, as some recent studies have revealed that a lack of technological and/or academic support can have negative effects on learning outcomes in on-line courses, particularly for high school students. More specifically, on-line delivery is most effective for those students who have strong technical skills, self-directed learning and motivational styles, and a high comfort level with the requirements of on-line communication.

With these caveats in mind, a Vermont Distance Learning Consortium is a critical strategy for addressing inequities in learning opportunities for high school and college students, and the diverse education and training needs of Vermont's small and large businesses. Vermont's Distance Learning Consortium would leverage the expertise and resources of the University of Vermont and the five colleges of the Vermont State Colleges system, as well as integrate the resources and expertise of the Department of Education and the state's 58 high schools. As indicated above, nearly every state is considering such a consortial approach to improving learning opportunities and outcomes for students of all ages, which seems particularly fitting for Vermont's rural landscape and economy.

An integrated distance learning strategy allows institutions to retain individual strengths while leveraging resources across institutions to best serve the needs of the entire state, especially those areas traditionally underserved. Outlined below are the goals, infrastructure needs, planning/implementation needs, organizational priorities, and initial target audiences/programs for Consortium. The VSC/UVM/DOE partnership is committed to making the initial investment to establish the Distance Learning Consortium through the activities described at the end of this paper.

### Goals of Vermont's Distance Learning Consortium

Link preK-20 students and teachers, business and industry, communities throughout the state to:

- ◆ build capacity to expand learning opportunities and improve learning outcomes for diverse audiences throughout Vermont's preK-20 public education system;



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- ◆ build capacity to better serve the education and training needs of Vermont businesses, and the economic development needs of the state;
- ◆ enhance statewide coordination and responsiveness to local, regional and statewide needs;
- ◆ integrate and expand the capacity of existing and emerging systems, including VIT, UVM's distance learning network, VSC and UVM on-line learning, and Vermont's Interactive Learning Network (ILN);
- ◆ extend access to post-secondary education for non-traditional students, raising the level of lifelong learning opportunities across the state;
- ◆ maximize efficiencies across Vermont's preK-20 public education and workforce education/training systems.

### **Infrastructure Needs**

- ◆ Increase capacity of VIT for priority education/training delivery, including the addition of selected Community College of Vermont sites.
- ◆ Increase capacity of and connectivity between the VSC's and UVM's distributed learning networks, including multi-channel capabilities throughout the system.
- ◆ Expand the Vermont ILN network to include links to UVM and VSC campuses.

### **Planning/Implementation Needs**

- ◆ Business plan for Vermont Distance Learning Consortium, including goals/objectives, timeline for activities, budget and assessment measures.
- ◆ Statewide steering committee (create overlap with the existing ILN Steering Committee to assure coordination across programs, services and operations).
- ◆ Plan for integrating VSC and UVM distributed learning networks.
- ◆ Ongoing technical and programmatic support for Consortium.
- ◆ Professional development plan for Consortium members.
- ◆ Plan for linking ILN to VSC and UVM campuses.

### **Organizational Priorities**

- ◆ Develop programs and services to address critical state needs (e.g., high schools without sufficient resources to offer AP courses, K-12 shortage areas such as school leaders, health care shortage areas such as nursing, employer shortage areas such as information technology, post-secondary vocational training).
- ◆ Coordinate distance learning program and service delivery between the VSC and UVM to increase efficiency and effectiveness, to broaden access, to leverage resources across institutions, and to reduce competition.
- ◆ Develop joint strategy to support technical, personnel, and facilities needs to serve diverse audiences.
- ◆ Develop cross-system, longitudinal assessment strategies.
- ◆ Develop collaborative approaches to electronic library acquisitions and information management.

### **Initial Target Audiences/Programs**

- ◆ Target specific high-needs areas in preK-20 education for new program development and delivery (e.g., school leaders, special education, expansion of professional development school model to integrate professional development and pre-service teacher education, other teacher licensure areas with high numbers of waivers).
- ◆ Target specific high needs areas in the health professions for new program development and delivery (e.g., nursing, gerontology).
- ◆ Extend access to VSC and UVM offerings in support of emerging degree completion programs.

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- ◆ Work in partnership with economic development to target specific high needs areas in business/industry for new program development and delivery (e.g., information technology, post-secondary vocational training, unique small business needs).
- ◆ Expand advanced and alternative offerings to high school students, especially to rural/underserved populations.
- ◆ Develop new strategies for increasing adult literacy.
- ◆ Create new mentoring opportunities (e.g., for students, beginning teachers, home day care providers).

## 2001 Public Policy Investment by Partners

In 2001, the Vermont Public Education Partnership is making the initial investment to support the Vermont Distance Learning Consortium in two ways: by funding the first stage of infrastructure development, and by establishing a coordinating committee to develop a business plan for ongoing planning and operations of the Consortium.

The first stage of infrastructure development will connect the K-12 ILN system to UVM and the VSC, to expand learning opportunities for the entire preK-20 learning community. This stage also will include the establishment of an on-line catalog that lists all VSC and UVM on-line courses on a single Web page, provides access to registration for these courses, and offers additional information toward the development of a full-service Vermont Distance Learning Consortium web site.

A critical part of this initial stage of development is the proposed expansion of VIT to create additional sites, which is not included in the budget below.

### VERMONT DISTANCE LEARNING CONSORTIUM: STAGE 1 INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

Need	Cost	Source of Funds
Connect ILN to VSC/UVM	\$40,000	DOE/VISMT
Establish VSC/UVM on-line catalog and single-point of access to registration for on-line courses	\$10,000	VSC/UVM split
<b>Investment by Partnership</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	

The business plan will address the identification of strategic service and program delivery priorities, integration and expansion of current systems, infrastructure and support needs, and coordination of offerings to assure statewide access. An important aspect of this work will be to envision and create a distance learning system that supports individual Vermonters as well as organizations in the determination of learning goals, the assessment of their learning needs vis-a-vis those goals, and the development of a learning plan to meet them. The Consortium, then, becomes a vital part of Vermont's educational and economic development strategies.

The initial coordinating committee will include representatives from: the VSC, UVM, DOE, VIT, and Vermont ILN. Through VHEC, the partnership will invite independent colleges to participate in all levels of planning and implementation. Given the work of the coordinating committee to identify specific target groups for whom distance learning will address unmet education/training needs, committee membership may be expanded depending on the needs identified.

The committee will develop a public policy agenda for the Vermont Consortium for Distance Learning, which will include a plan to request federal, state, and other funds to support a sustainable, responsive, learner-centered, and innovative statewide distance learning system. This strategy will provide Vermonters greater access to a rich and needs-based array of opportunities for post-secondary education, workforce education and training, and personal and professional development.

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