



Developing Flexible Pathway Profiles at the Local Level

Facilitation Guide

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Issued by the Vermont Agency of Education Personalized Learning Team

Purpose of the Pathways Profile Tool

The purpose of the Pathways Profile tool is to assist schools and LEAs in developing, improving upon, and communicating Flexible Pathway opportunities that are effective, equitable, compliant, and safe. It is not intended to be a checklist, but rather a robust tool for teams to evaluate how they implement procedures, practices, and processes for Flexible Pathways consistent with [Vermont's Education Quality Standards](#), and foster transparency with students, staff, families, and the community.

Background

From 2016 – 2019, AOE staff from the Student Pathways division engaged in listening tours, participated on Integrated Field Reviews (IFRs), facilitated collaboratives and showcases of learning, and collected the questions and observations of students, educators, parents, community members, legislators, business owners, and other Vermont stakeholders to better understand challenges to implementation of personalized learning and Flexible Pathways in Vermont.

These experiences indicated that improvement was needed to reach parity between student groups in access, opportunity, and equity of educational experiences, specifically regarding Flexible Pathways to graduation. In 2018, the Agency began to develop technical assistance sensitive to the unique needs and context of a local school community that also encouraged consistency in implementation and educational equity across the state. A set of resources referred to as the Flexible Pathways Implementation Kit is the result of these efforts, these documents will be revised and updated as necessary. The following facilitation guide provides guidance for using the [Flexible Pathways Profile: A Tool to Evaluate Flexible Pathways at the Local Level](#), herein after referred to as the Pathways Profile Tool.

Using the Pathways Profile Tool

The Pathways Profile Tool is intended to be a tool for school and district representatives to make an informed decision about whether a particular learning opportunity is effective, equitable, compliant, and safe at a level that qualifies it as a Flexible Pathway accessible to all students at their school. Before offering a Flexible Pathway opportunity to students, school and district leaders should initially review each opportunity using this tool.

What are Flexible Pathways?

The [Flexible Pathways to Secondary School Completion Initiative](#), passed by the Legislature in 2013, described opportunities school districts could provide to engage and support students to complete secondary school.

Per [16 V.S.A. § 941](#), Flexible Pathways include:

- [Virtual and Blended Learning](#)
- [Career Technical Education](#)

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- [Dual Enrollment](#)
 - [Early College](#)
 - [High School Completion Program](#)
 - [Work-Based Learning](#)

Nothing in the Flexible Pathways Initiative, “shall be construed as discouraging or limiting the authority of any school district to develop or continue to provide educational opportunities for its students that are otherwise permitted...”

Additional Flexible Pathways can be developed such as, but not limited to the following:

- [Expanded Learning Opportunities](#)
 - After-school and Summer Programs

Convening a Team

When using the Pathways Profile Tool to develop a local profile for each Flexible Pathway opportunity offered at your school it is recommended that you convene a team of diverse educational stakeholders.

While team composition may change from school to school or based on the Flexible Pathway you are reviewing, it is important to have on any team individuals who meet these overarching criteria:

- a decision-maker,
- personnel familiar with the specific Flexible Pathway under consideration,
- personnel involved in PLP/scheduling/etc.,
- personnel involved in assessing for proficiency,
- students who have participated/engaged in the Flexible Pathway.

Administrators, educators, special educators, students, instructional coaches, Flexible Pathway or PLP coordinators, community-based learning teachers, school counselors, work-based learning coordinators, parents/guardians, and other adults involved in Flexible Pathways can and should be involved in the discussion.

In addition to reviewing Flexible Pathways opportunities, students should be involved in determining whether a particular Flexible Pathway is appropriate for them using the [Student Participation Tool](#) and [Student Participation Facilitation Guide](#).

Strategies to Consider

Schools may wonder when or how they'll find the time to create profiles of pathways. We suggest that schools/leaders consider leveraging existing teams, schedules, and structures to engage in the evaluation and development of profiles of Flexible Pathways. For example, consider:

- whether EST Leadership teams may evaluate Flexible Pathways as a core component of a school's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS);

- leveraging Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), or similar structure, as an opportunity for staff teams to engage in targeted work;
- utilizing in-service days for whole staff engagement in evaluating and improving upon how students prepare for, engage in, and are evaluated for learning that takes place outside of the school/classroom.

When This Tool Should be Used

Teams should develop Flexible Pathways Profiles for any existing Flexible Pathways that are offered at their schools. This process can begin at any point during the school year; beginning at any time is the crucial first step. Regardless of whether a new opportunity is being developed or reviewing existing Flexible Pathway opportunities, school teams should evaluate and update their profiles on an annual basis. The time of year when this occurs depends on the capacity and the planning cycle for each school.

Strategies to Consider

Once schools have developed their Flexible Pathway profiles, it is recommended that profiles be revisited during each academic year to allow for inclusion in Programs of Study, the website, and in any other publications where schools make their learning opportunities visible for the next academic year.

Additionally, any time a school makes a modification to a Flexible Pathway, develops a new Flexible Pathway to graduation, or identifies a barrier to equitable participation in an existing Flexible Pathway, a team should be convened to update/document for the future.

Walking a Team Through the Tool

Prior to engaging with the tool, we recommend the team has the following materials on hand: any documented procedures or policies for existing Flexible Pathway opportunities (including learning experiences that are on and/or off campus), local graduation requirements (PBGRs), school handbook, school program of studies, and the [Student Participation Tool](#).

Once a team has been convened, the following are a set of recommended steps as you use the [Pathways Profile Tool](#):

1. Identify a team member who can act as facilitator and who can convene the group when updates to the profile are needed. You may also want to consider identifying a timekeeper and recorder/note-taker depending on the size of your team. Regardless of the team structure, it will be important to capture the information as you develop the pathway profile.
2. As a Team, read through each question in the *Consideration* column. Depending on the size of your team, you may want to assign different *Consideration* sections to different groups to work through (e.g., if it was a school-wide exercise - consider assigning different sections to different

groups, then rotate or report out for feedback). [*Resource to Consider*: [SRI Tuning Protocol](#)]

3. Collect the appropriate information within your school to answer each question. Consider sending the tool template to team members in advance to allow them to gather supporting documents, review as needed, and consult with appropriate school/district personnel who may have relevant expertise.
4. Add the information and/or provide a brief explanation to answer the question in the Evidence column.

What is ‘Yes’?

If the evidence provided answers the question in the affirmative, answer ‘Yes’ in the *YES, or Action Steps to get to Yes* column. When saying ‘Yes,’ Teams should, as much as possible, consider linking/attaching existing school/district documentation related to the question.

What if we can’t say ‘Yes’?

If the answer to a question is ‘No’ or ‘Not Yet’, it does not necessarily mean that the opportunity cannot be offered. Instead, use the question(s) to prompt your thinking about action steps that are necessary to get to ‘Yes’, including additional information, resources, or improved processes and policies.

Of special note, questions related to equity concerns can help surface systemic opportunity gaps that need to be addressed. For example, question 1e, *What orientation and/or preparation structures are in place to initiate learners to the experience*, provides an opportunity to consider additional orientation protocols and procedures to provide opportunities for additional Flexible Pathways.

When identifying action steps, it will be important to identify what additional information may be needed, who is responsible for tracking down information, and when the team will revisit the Pathways Profile Tool.

Summary

At this point, the AOE is not collecting the Flexible Pathway Profiles or Student Participation tools nor are they asking schools to submit them. The AOE expects that schools will use the questions in the guides to ensure appropriate, equitable placement, understands that the local context will vary from school to school, and hopes that schools will publish their Flexible Pathways Profiles.

Use this facilitation guide with the Pathway Profile tool to ensure that all locally offered Flexible Pathways are effective, equitable, compliant, and safe. This can be used to evaluate a new Flexible Pathway opportunity and can be part of an ongoing cycle of continuous improvement of existing Flexible Pathway opportunities. The AOE may discuss elements of a school’s Flexible Pathway opportunities as part of the [Education Quality Assurance Process](#).

Pathway Profile Examples

These additional resources will be developed and made available on the AOE [Flexible Pathways](#) page.

Pathways Profile Tool Examples	Student Participation Tool Examples	Student Participation FP Talking Points
Dual Enrollment	Dual Enrollment	Dual Enrollment
Early College	Early College	Early College
Work Based Learning	Work Based Learning	Work Based Learning
	Center for Technology Education	Center for Technology Education
	Virtual Blended Learning	Virtual Blended Learning

Resources

The following resources are referenced throughout the Pathways Profile Tool associated with this Facilitation Guide.

Pathways Profile Tool links

[Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements](#)

[\(PBGR\) – Access Plan](#)

[Go Vermont Connecting Commuters](#)

[ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies](#)

[Case Study Learning Project](#)

[Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) and Accessibility](#)

[Fair Labor Standards Act](#)

[OSHA](#)

[Vermont Student Privacy Alliance](#)

[Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#)

[16 V.S.A. § 255; Access to Criminal Records](#)

[VSBA Required Policy: Volunteers and Work Study Students](#)