



219 North Main Street, Suite 402
Barre, VT 05641 (p) 802-479-1030 | (f) 802-479-1835

What is Personalized Learning?

As we move to an educational system in Vermont that integrates personalized learning, proficiency-based education, and Multi-tiered System of Supports, it is important to work from shared definitions and understanding to support the interrelationship of these practices, policies and initiatives. In developing this common understanding, work has been adapted from multiple sources.

Personalization is “a learning process in which schools help students assess their own talents and aspirations, plan a pathway toward their own purposes, work cooperatively with others in challenging tasks, maintain a record of explorations, and demonstrate their learning against clear standards in a wide variety of media, all with the close support of adult mentors and guides.” (National Association of Secondary School Principals)

Personalized learning is systems and approaches that deepen student learning by incorporating each student’s interests, strengths and needs - including student voice and choice in what, how, when and where they learn - to achieve the goals of active engagement, academic success, and preparation for post-secondary opportunities. Personalized learning and personalized instructional approaches are critical to students in kindergarten through grade 6 as well as grades 7-12.

What are the essential attributes of personalized learning environments?

1. Personal Relationships (16 V.S.A. § 941): Truly personalized education is predicated on, and fosters, positive student-staff relationships. In a personalized learning environment, students and staff have mutual respect, every student feels connected to at least one trusted adult, educators know their students’ interests, goals, and academic levels, and students experience higher levels of achievement.

2. Flexibility (Flexible Pathways) (16 V.S.A. § 941): Students have the opportunity to experience learning through any combination of high-quality academic and experiential components leading to secondary school completion and postsecondary readiness. For example, in Vermont students can participate in:
 - a. Dual Enrollment and Early College
 - b. Blended/Virtual Learning
 - c. Work-Based Learning
 - d. High School Completion Program
 - e. Expanded Learning Opportunities
 - f. Career Technical Education

3. Learner Profiles (Personalized Learning Plans or PLPs): Each student has current documentation of their individual strengths, needs, motivations, and goals.

- PLPs reflect a collaborative planning process by which student pathways to graduation are identified (16 V.S.A. § 941)
- PLPs reflect progress toward proficiency-based graduation requirements (EQS 2120.4) and are meaningful artifacts to and for the student. PLPs adapt, change, and progress along with students; reflect a student's authentic learning; and can act as an exhibition of student growth.

4. Proficiency-Based Progression (EQS 2120.1; 2120.7, 2121.5; 2123.2): Instruction is aligned to proficiencies based on transferable skills and standards adopted by the state of Vermont. Each student's progress toward clearly-defined goals is continually assessed. A student advances as they demonstrate proficiency. Students and parents have access to clear, transferable learning objectives and assessment results so they understand what is expected. Each school shall ensure that a tiered system of academic and behavioral supports is in place to assist all students in working toward attainment of these goals.

5. Student Agency (EQS 2120.1; 2120.2; 2123.2): All students are held to clear, high expectations, and students take ownership over their own learning. With the help of their teachers, they are involved in designing their own learning process and should be given a choice in how they demonstrate their learning through performance-based assessments.