



# VSAC Curriculum Map

## Introduction

The VSAC Curriculum Map organizes, by grade level, the enduring understandings and skills that VSAC believes students must learn to be prepared to pursue postsecondary education and career opportunities after high school. These enduring understandings and skills are grouped together by a domain (large focus area) and sub-grouped into topics (big ideas students will explore). The Curriculum Map is based on research, existing models of similar frameworks from other postsecondary access programs across the nation, and decades of experience in Vermont. The VSAC Curriculum Map is a constantly evolving document. We regularly review its content with counselors to make improvements and updates and ensure that it reflects current research, best practice, and experience on the ground.

## Overview and Goal of the Curriculum Map

The VSAC Curriculum Map outlines what all students who participate in VSAC Outreach programs (GEAR UP and Talent Search) will know and be able to do by high school graduation and throughout their VSAC Outreach experience. Students should be exposed to all of the enduring understandings and skills outlined in the Curriculum Map during the indicated grade level time.

VSAC Outreach counselors utilize the VSAC Curriculum Map to create a curriculum plan as they engage with middle and high school students across the state. Reach out to a GEAR UP or Talent Search counselor at your school if you are interested in targeting specific skills in the curriculum map. The VSAC Curriculum Map may also interest you if you are a counselor, school leader, or teacher looking for postsecondary planning activities to do in your class or advisory. Our map was designed with Vermont schools in mind and supports and builds upon the social emotional and transferable skills that are already being taught in schools across the state that are crucial for students to learn in order to be successful in their pursuits after high school.

VSAC has a growing array of college and career planning learning activities that are directly related to our Curriculum Map. If you would like to target specific skills and utilize corresponding learning activities, please reach out to Lauren Hood, Aspirations School Specialist and Curriculum Lead, at [hood@vsac.org](mailto:hood@vsac.org).





# 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Domain (Focus Area)	Topic (Big Ideas students will explore)	Enduring Understandings (Students will understand...)	Skills (Students will know, be able to do)	
Academic	Study Skills	Time management, organizational, and study skills lead to success in school, work and life	Organize learning materials, prepare for class and meetings, and attend on time	
	Academic Achievement	Confronting challenges and addressing obstacles allow for a successful transition to high school	Establish and complete goals for the transition to high school, including doing well in necessary coursework	
	Growth Mindset	A growth or fixed mindset has a direct impact on how we face academic and life challenges	Identify and reframe a fixed mindset into a growth mindset	
Social	Self-Advocacy	Advocating for yourself and cooperating with others are critical to success in life and work	Practice effective self-advocacy skills through communication and cooperative relationships, in academic and social arenas	
	Social Emotional Wellbeing	Developing social/emotional health can have a positive impact on your academic and personal life, especially during transitions	Identify and prioritize positive relationships and stress management strategies on a regular basis	
Postsecondary Planning	Career Exploration and Awareness	When you choose a job and career based on your interests, values, abilities, and strengths, you are more likely to find success and satisfaction in that job and career	Research career clusters, identify those of interest, and match careers with personal skills	
			Identify values, interests, personalities and abilities	
			Describe the importance of personal skills, abilities and attitudes to job and career success	
			Define postsecondary education terms	
	Post-secondary Education and Employment	Employers and educational institutions put great value on personal and interpersonal relationship skills as well as a positive attitude and work habits	Most people have multiple jobs and careers over their lives, and earn higher incomes with higher levels of education, training, and experience	Identify how education and training match with careers and affect lifetime income potential
			Developing basic money management skills will help you be successful later in life	Recognize and communicate personal qualities necessary for success in various careers and postsecondary education
Financial Aid and Literacy	Financial aid makes postsecondary education accessible and more affordable	Developing basic money management skills will help you be successful later in life	Explore basic money management topics, including financial decision making and budgeting	
		Financial aid makes postsecondary education accessible and more affordable	Compare the costs of post-secondary education with the income from a career of choice	



# 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

Domain (Focus Area)	Topic (Big Ideas students will explore)	Enduring Understandings (Students will understand...)	Skills (Students will know, be able to do)
Academic	Study Skills	Organizational and study skills lead to success	Use tools and learning strategies to manage attendance, assignments, and tests
	Academic Achievement	Maintaining strong academics and taking designated courses affect higher education options	Describe flexible pathway and course options, including Dual Enrollment (DE), Early College (EC), Work-Based Learning (WBL), Honors and AP, and how to enroll in them
		Identifying and addressing any barriers to the transition to high school will ease stress and lead to success	Make an initial four-year plan for courses that meet requirements for graduation and postsecondary education
	Goal Setting	Setting goals helps you achieve your dreams and be successful	Manage transition to high school through developing routines and connecting with supportive adults Create and reflect on academic and personal goals (ex. SMART goals)
Social	Self Advocacy	Advocating for yourself and cooperating with others are critical to success in life and work	Demonstrate organized and purposeful communication and cooperative relationships
		Every person is unique and should have a voice	Practice effective self-advocacy skills in academic and social arenas
	Social Emotional Wellbeing	Developing social/emotional health can have a positive impact on your academic and personal life	Identify and prioritize positive relationships and stress management strategies on a regular basis
Postsecondary Planning	Career Exploration and Awareness	Awareness of your values, interests, and abilities helps make informed career decisions	Make a connection between personal values, interests and abilities, and potential career pathways
		Education and professional advancement continue after high school	Explore career pathways and connect them with postsecondary education opportunities
	Post-secondary Education and Employability Skills	Communication, collaboration, and a positive work ethic are important for success in employment and education	Define postsecondary education terms Describe and demonstrate appropriate work habits and interpersonal skills needed to obtain and retain employment and education
		Financial Aid and Literacy	Financial aid, and a plan to repay debt, make postsecondary education accessible and allow for a healthy financial future
	Understanding how to manage money is important for navigating adulthood		Explore topics such as debt, interest, spending and saving



# 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

Domain (Focus Area)	Topic (Big Ideas students will explore)	Enduring Understandings (Students will understand...)	Skills (Students will know, be able to do)	
Academic	Study Skills	Optimal study habits and transferable skills – such as time management, persistence and communication – lead to academic and postsecondary success	Create a plan for success in each course, and revise plan as needed	
			Outline the steps in the career planning process through postsecondary education using VSAC's postsecondary planning tools	
			Use test-taking strategies for courses and postsecondary entrance exams	
	Identify, develop and use skills that are transferable in education and employment			
Academic Achievement	You can get college credit in high school which saves time and money and gives you more options during postsecondary	Make adjustments as needed to four-year plan to include relevant courses and programs (such as DE, EC, AP, Honors)		
Goal Setting	Goal-setting is a critical component of any academic, socio-emotional or post-secondary planning process	Create and reflect on academic and career goals to support postsecondary planning (ex. SMART goals)		
Social	Self Advocacy	Advocating for yourself is critical to success in life, work and education	Identify, manage, and assess new opportunities related to learning goals.	
	Social Emotional Wellbeing	Communicating and cooperating with others is essential to success in school, community, and transitional settings	Collaborate and communicate effectively and respectfully	
		Developing social/emotional health can have a positive impact on your academic and personal life	Identify and prioritize positive relationships and stress management strategies on a regular basis	
Postsecondary Planning	Search and Selection	Awareness of your personality style, values, interests and abilities helps make informed career decisions and post-secondary plans	Explore a variety of career fields related to their personality style, values, interests and abilities; identify which career fields match their interests, abilities, and values	
		All positions along a career/interest pathway have specific preparation and education requirements, and provide opportunities for satisfaction	Connect career interest/pathway to college major or postsecondary program	
		When identifying fit, stretch, and safety schools/programs, consider academic, social, and financial aspects	Research and make a list of college majors and postsecondary programs of interest	
	Applying and Admission	It is up to the student to personalize the application and use this process to highlight their unique strengths	Identify key features of college or training programs that match academic, social and financial needs	Identify reach, target and safety schools/programs
			Become familiar with the postsecondary education application process and articulate strengths to highlight	
	Financial Literacy and Aid	Financial aid comes from various sources, and access to aid is related to a family's financial situation	Explain the various financial aid applications (FAFSA, CSS Profile, Scholarships, & Grants) and how they are related to family's financial situation	
Educational debt should correlate to potential career earnings			Predict the impact their educational plan will have on their income and any potential debt	



# 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

Domain (Focus Area)	Topic (Big Ideas students will explore)	Enduring Understandings (Students will understand...)	Skills (Students will know, be able to do)
Academic	Time Management	Successful time management skills improve stress and efficiency, and are important for navigating school, work and life	Prioritize social, academic, community obligations and postsecondary deadlines Articulate how time management is important in getting and maintaining a job, having a career and in postsecondary education
	Academic Achievement	Persisting academically is vital to postsecondary success	Review academic record and connect rigorous coursework and classes to college majors and career pathways (dual enrollment, AP classes)
		Identifying and addressing any barriers to the transition to postsecondary education or the workforce will ease stress and lead to success	Identify strategies for successful transition to postsecondary education opportunities and workforce
	Goal Setting	A growth mindset and goal-setting are critical for academic, socio-emotional or post-secondary success	Set, articulate, and modify goals Recognize obstacles and find positive solutions
Social	Self Advocacy	Advocating for yourself and collaborating with others are essential to success in life, work and education	Identify and effectively communicate what you need and ask for help as needed
	Social Emotional Wellbeing	Developing social/emotional health can have a positive impact on your academic and personal life, especially during transitions	Identify and prioritize positive relationships and stress management strategies on a regular basis
Postsecondary Planning	Search and Selection	It is important to make a postsecondary plan that aligns with your interests and needs	Identify preferred postsecondary program(s) or school(s)
	Applying and Admission	Being prepared for, personalizing, and highlighting unique strengths in any application process will increase your chances of success	Practice interviewing skills
			Create application materials highlighting strengths and skills, and complete the application process
	Financial Aid and Literacy	Applying for financial aid will reduce out-of-pocket costs	Research and apply for financial aid, including grants and scholarships (gift aid)
		Understanding your family's financial situation and the impact of borrowing helps with decision-making around financing postsecondary education	Review and compare financial aid award letters and distinguish best options, recognizing the difference between cost of attendance and net cost
			Distinguish between repayment terms for federal and private loans Calculate potential loan debt to first-year earnings
In order to live independently, you need to understand how to manage money	Discuss the components of a personal spending plan, including income, planned saving and expenses		



# Resources

American School Counselor Association (2021). *ASCA Student Standards; Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

*A Vermont Portrait of a Graduate*. (Revised, 2020, April 13). State of Vermont Agency of Education. <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-a-vt-portrait-of-a-graduate-with-performance-indicators.pdf>

*College Knowledge Games Toolkit | Oregon Goes to College*. Oregon Goes to College. Retrieved 2019, from <https://oregongoestocollege.org/toolkits/college-games>

Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy. (2017). *National Standards in K-12 Personal Finance Education*. Washington, DC. Retrieved 2019, from [https://3yxm0a3wfgvh5wbo7lvyl13-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2017\\_NationalStandardsBook.pdf](https://3yxm0a3wfgvh5wbo7lvyl13-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2017_NationalStandardsBook.pdf)

Powerschool. *The College, Career, and Life Readiness Framework*. Retrieved 2019, from [http://go.powerschool.com/rs/861-RMI-846/images/CCLR\\_Framework.pdf?mkt\\_tok=ODYxLVJNSS04NDYAAAGHqo-zHNk25gVySb5wvMDVHiy2yLT-w\\_sthLQD2GNV93geeddE5SmhWc9ZHvdL7jUKKpXn1izrZB-DFyXoTw1kRZJW9tiEvWX0ticXWNBACP0Mf9eI](http://go.powerschool.com/rs/861-RMI-846/images/CCLR_Framework.pdf?mkt_tok=ODYxLVJNSS04NDYAAAGHqo-zHNk25gVySb5wvMDVHiy2yLT-w_sthLQD2GNV93geeddE5SmhWc9ZHvdL7jUKKpXn1izrZB-DFyXoTw1kRZJW9tiEvWX0ticXWNBACP0Mf9eI)

*Transferable Skills: Sample Graduation Proficiencies and Performance Indicators*. (Revised, 2016, August 16). State of Vermont Agency of Education. <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-proficiency-based-education-transferrable-skills-sample-graduation-proficiencies.pdf>