



Aspirations Partnership Strategy and Stages

VSAC's Aspirations Partnership goal: Build a school's capacity to graduate all students with a plan for their future.

Aspirations Partnership strategy: Based on more than 50 years of experience working with schools in Vermont and grounded in research, we believe the following strategies are essential in achieving the Aspirations Partnership goal outlined above.



Involve multiple stakeholders—including school leadership, staff, families, and students—in assessing, improving, and learning about college and career readiness and planning.



Use data to inform, shape, and assess programming and practices.



Integrate college and career readiness curriculum and information into the school practices, courses, events, and resources through advisory or class meetings, and into communication with and events for families. Ensure that *all* students receive this curriculum, information, opportunities, and resources.



Provide **professional learning** for educators and school staff on the research-based promising practices and strategies related to college and career readiness.

Timeline of Aspirations Partnership

School Selection: Before we begin work with a school, we ensure that school and district leadership are committed to **using the lens of college and career readiness to look at systems and teacher practice**. It is vital that school leaders carve out the necessary time to provide professional learning and facilitated conversations with diverse stakeholders, and to incorporate data review into the systems and practices of the school.

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Our work looks different over the course of 3–4 years. While our model and strategy are fluid and flexible, we use the following steps as a guide to articulate the flow of our collaborative work.

By the end of our 4 years together, each school will have identified and developed a College and Career Scope and Sequence that outlines: 5–8 learning activities; parent events and field trips; and associated information, resources, and professional learning to support the Scope and Sequence content integration across the grades.

Year 1: Understand School Culture and Asset Mapping



- **Establish a steering committee:** The school gathers a group of diverse school stakeholders, including youth, teachers, leadership, and families, to form a steering committee that works with the VSAC’s Aspirations team to collect information, create and implement the action plan, and oversee the Aspirations project in general. The work of the Aspirations Partnership must be informed and led by members of the school community, and the steering committee forms this backbone of the partnership.
- **Understand strengths and needs:** Using surveys, anecdotal evidence, facilitated conversations, and 1–2 community gatherings and events, the steering committee—with facilitation and support from VSAC—will collect information about the school’s current college and career culture and practices. The steering committee will look at the data and determine how best to integrate the data into the action plan, professional learning, and facilitated conversations with diverse stakeholders.
- **Provide Professional Learning (PL):** To ensure that all staff have a shared understanding of college and career readiness and content, and are engaged in the project, VSAC will provide a series of PL opportunities focused on college and career readiness content and will facilitate on-going conversations with the steering committee and staff related to data, action plan, and teacher practice. Professional learning will be preplanned as well as informed by data collected from surveys and teacher input. (Draft PL plan available.)
- **Design action plan:** With facilitation from the VSAC’s Aspirations team, the steering committee develops an action plan that identifies activities and strategies to focus on and employ during Years 2 and 3.

Years 2 & 3: Implement

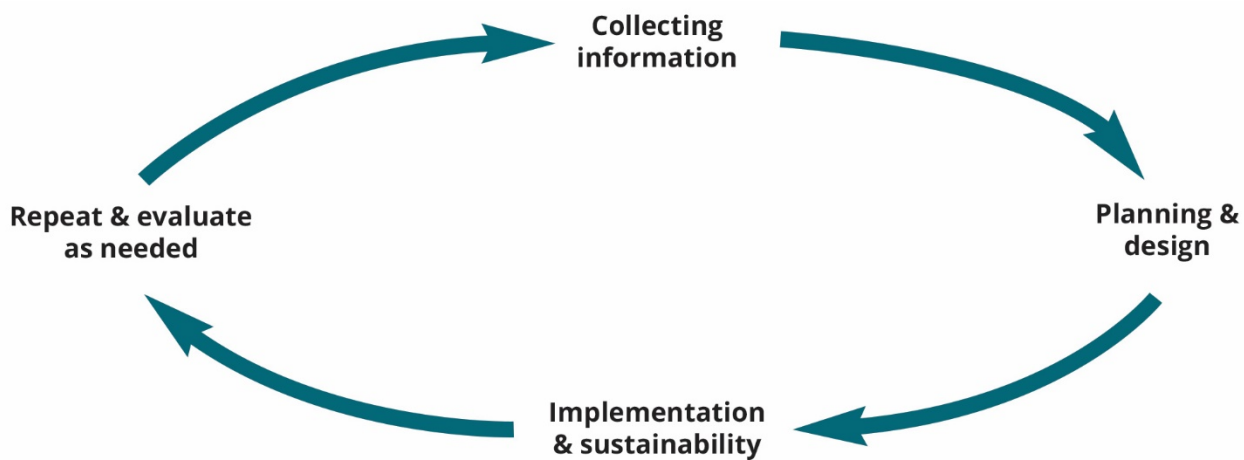


In the second and third year, the steering committee uses the **action plan to implement and pilot college and career readiness activities, events, curriculum, and practices while providing professional learning** for teachers and facilitated conversations for

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students, staff and parents, based on the school's data and specific areas of need. Ongoing leadership, teacher, student, and family input is critical to any activity or plan.

- **Implementation and sustainability:** After the action plan implementation begins. The steering committee will assess the success and sustainability of our collective work and will identify ways to continue to shift and integrate college and career readiness curriculum, professional learning, conversations, activities, and practices into the school's systems. (We recommend focusing on 2 grade levels at a time for years 2 and 3 for implementation.)
- **Action plan specific professional learning and facilitated conversations:** VSAC will facilitate or coordinate professional learning and facilitated conversations, based on needs identified from data collection and action plan.
- **Repeat and evaluate as needed:** Each year we use data and anecdotal evidence to shape and refine the school's action plan. We ask questions like: *"Which of these activities do you want to embed in your culture and continue into the future?"* and *"What can we do this coming year to deepen our work and embed this work into the fabric of your school?"*



Final Project Year: Reflect, Refine, Sustain & Celebrate



In our final year with a school, we focus on the **sustainability** of the partnership. We **reflect** on our work; **refine** and document curriculum, events, activities, and resources; and **celebrate** our accomplishments. To ensure that the work continues, we focus on documentation to:

- develop specific staff to lead events and programs,
- secure funding to continue programming, and
- facilitate conversations and dialogue about the impact this work has had and will continue to have on teacher practice, student learning and success, and the school's college and career culture.

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