



VSAC Curriculum Map

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GearUP
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Introduction

The VSAC Map defines the skills that VSAC believes students must learn to be prepared to pursue education and training opportunities after high school.

The Curriculum Map is based on research, transferable skills, existing models of similar frameworks from other postsecondary access programs across the nation, and decades of experience in Vermont. The map is an evolving document to ensure that it reflects current research, best practices, and experience on the ground.

The Map is For...

- VSAC Outreach Counselors (GEAR UP and Talent Search)
- School Counselors
- School leaders
- Educators

Using the Map

The skills listed are not exhaustive and should not be restrictive. They do not describe how the skills should be taught, scaled, or adapted which means much is left up to the educator. We trust that you know your students best and will create opportunities with the skills as a guide much like Common Core Standards are used.

Examples of Use

- GEAR UP and Talent Search utilize the map to create a curriculum plan to outline the learning activities that they will do with middle and high school students across the state. Collaborate with a GEAR UP or Talent Search counselor at your school.
- Educators use the map's skills to develop activities for students in advisory or other classes.
- Educators use the map as a guide for age appropriate formal or informal conversations with students about their future.

Contact

VSAC has a growing array of education and training learning activities. If you would like to target specific skills from our curriculum map and utilize corresponding learning activities, please reach out to Lauren Hood, VSAC Curriculum Lead, at hood@vsac.org.



Grade	Enduring Understandings - The big picture ideas and concepts VSAC wants students to understand and internalize
Grades 6,7,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many education and training pathways available to you. Most people have multiple jobs and careers over their lives, and earn higher incomes with higher levels of education, training, and experience • Awareness of your personality style, values, interests and abilities helps you make informed decisions for life after high school • Advocating for yourself and cooperating with others are critical to success in life and work • An adult in your life is invested in your interests and pathway
Grades 9,10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many flexible pathways opportunities available to you in high school and plan to take advantage of them early. (including graduating high school with credentials) • Financial aid makes education and training accessible and more affordable • Classes and courses taken now can impact future education and training opportunities • High school is a good time to practice soft skills to support a well rounded life after high school
Grade 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The choices you make for education and training can inform career choices and can enrich quality of life. • Life experiences like travel, volunteer work, and extracurriculars are beneficial to a high school experience and helps cultivate a robust resume and life after high school • Being prepared for, personalizing, and highlighting unique strengths in any application process will increase chances for success • The career you choose and the debt you take on for education and training should align with your values and life goals
Grade 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding your family's financial situation, how financial aid can reduce out-of-pocket costs, and the impact of borrowing helps with decision-making around financing education and training • Budgeting, saving, and making a plan for potential repayment is essential to managing money after high school • Adjusting your plans and goals for life after high school is normal and expected as you grow and change • Identifying and addressing any barriers to the transition to education, training, or the workforce will ease stress and lead to success

K-5 Guidance: Data shows that talking to students earlier in their future planning process helps them in making informed decisions. If you are interested in guidance for K-5 students, we recommend you start with the K-5 Career Awareness and Exploration Standards from the Virginia Department of Education

Topics	Skills - (Students will be able to...)
Academics	Identify and explore tools and learning strategies to organize learning materials and prepare for class. Reflect on how time is spent and how to budget time for school (like homework) and hobbies. (6-8.1)
	Create and work towards goals for the transition to high school, including doing well in necessary coursework. (6-8.2)
	Identify and reframe a fixed mindset into a growth mindset. (6-8.3)
Career Exploration and Awareness	Understand and identify values, interests, and abilities (6-8.4)
	Research career clusters and identify those of interest (6-8.5)
	Understand and recognize education and training terms to talk about future plans (6-8.6)
Employability Skills	Describe the 4Cs (Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, Critical Thinking) and why they are important for various careers (6-8.7)
	Identify individual strengths in communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking (6-8.8)
Financial Aid and Literacy	Explore financial decision making and budgeting (6-8.9)
	Compare the incomes from careers of interest (6-8.10)

Topics	Skills - (Students will be able to...)
Academics	Practice and use tools and learning strategies to manage attendance, assignments, and tests. Budget and balance time to prioritize school tasks while also making time for hobbies (9-10.1)
	Describe flexible pathways and course options, including rigorous coursework, Dual Enrollment (DE), Early College (EC), Work-Based Learning (WBL), Career and Technical Education (CTE), Honors, AP, and how to enroll in them (9-10.2)
	Review and reflect on a four-year plan for courses that meet requirements for graduation and education and training after high school (9-10.3)
	Develop routines and connect with supportive adults regularly to aid in the transition to high school (9-10.4)
	Create and reflect on short-term and long-term academic and personal goals (ex. SMART goals) (9-10.5)
Career Exploration and Awareness	Connect values, interests and abilities to potential career pathways (9-10.6)
	Research and compare career pathways and connect them with education and training opportunities (9-10.7)
	Use education and training terms to discuss and make plans for the future (9-10.8)
Employability Skills	Identify work habits, interpersonal skills, and other soft skills to improve on and make a plan to develop throughout high school (9-10.9)
	Discuss self-advocacy and practice scenarios to advocate for oneself (9-10.10)
Financial Aid and Literacy	Evaluate how different types of education and training affect lifetime income potential (9-10.11)
	Recognize and begin to use terms to talk about paying for education and training after high school (FAFSA, CSS profile, Grants, Scholarships) (9-10.12)
	Discuss how money relates to family, community, and regional values (9-10.13)

Topics	Skills - (Students will be able to...)
Academics	Create a plan for success in each course, and revise plan as needed (11.1)
	Outline the steps in the career planning process using VSAC's education and training planning tools (11.2)
	Practice and use test-taking strategies for courses and education and training entrance exams (11.3)
	Practice balancing work, school, extra-curricular, and hobbies. Reflect on what they can reasonably add to their schedule and connect with people who can support them in having a healthy balance (11.4)
	Review and reflect on four-year plan and academic record to make adjustments as needed and connect classes to college majors and career pathways. Discuss dual enrollment, early college, CTE, and AP courses. (11.5)
	Create and routinely reflect on and modify academic and career goals to support planning for life after high school (11.6)
Search and Selection	Evaluate potential career pathways to education and training after high school (11.7)
	Research and create a list of college majors and education and training programs of interest (11.8)
	Evaluate reach, target, and safety schools/programs (11.9)
	Discuss potential obstacles, solutions, and strategies related to planning for education and training (11.10)
	Evaluate what makes an education and training program the right fit (11.11)
Applying and Admission	Develop and understand the application processes for education and training (11.12)
	Identify key personal strengths to highlight in building a resume and completing application materials (11.13)
Financial Aid and Literacy	Understand the cost of education and training related to an identified career pathway and potential debt (11.14)
	Research and evaluate the various ways to pay for education and training (FAFSA, CSS profile, Scholarships, Grants) and discuss a potential plan that fits for the student and their family (11.15)
	Discuss ways to use and manage money for life after high school (11.16)

Topics	Skills - (Students will be able to...)
Academics	Balance academic, community, and social obligations while prioritizing education and training deadlines (12.1)
	Articulate how time management is important in getting and maintaining a job, having a career as well as in education and training (12.2)
	Identify skills needed for post high school plans and strategize how to best utilize 12th grade to build needed skills (12.3)
	Identify strategies for successful transition to education and training opportunities and workforce. Identify supports needed and how to access them when navigating life after high school (12.4)
	Set articulate and modify goals. Recognize obstacles and find positive solutions. (12.5)
Search and Selection	Identify preferred education and training programs (12.6)
	Apply to chosen education and training programs (12.7)
Applying and Admission	Build confidence in interviewing skills for employment and academic endeavors through practice (12.8)
	Organize and create application materials highlighting strengths and skills. Complete the application process (12.9)
	Research various supports that can be accessed in the community and through education and training programs (12.10)
Financial Aid and Literacy	Apply for financial aid, including grants and scholarships (12.11)
	Review and compare financial aid award letters and distinguish best options, recognizing the difference between cost of attendance and net cost (12.12)
	Distinguish between repayment terms for federal and private loans (12.13)
	Calculate potential loan debt to first-year earnings (12.14)
	Create a personal spending plan that includes expected income, planned savings, and expenses. (12.15)

Resources

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