



Vermont Financial Literacy Commission
June 6, 2016

Vermont Financial Literacy Commission Members Present:

Beth Pearce, co-chair, Vermont State Treasurer
John Pelletier, co-chair, Champlain College
Mark Perrin, State Board of Education
Martha Reid, Vermont State Librarian
Courtney Poquette, Winooski High School
Justin Brown, Colchester High School
Lisa Falcone, United Way of Chittenden County
Thomas Leavitt, Northfield Savings Bank
Yvonne Garand, VSECU
Linda Tarr-Whelan, Tarr-Whelan Associates
Sabina Haskell, VSAC, representing commission member Scott Giles

Also Present:

Tim Lueders-Dumont, Office of the Treasurer, Policy Director
Joshua Metayer, BayState Financial

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Pelletier called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. The meeting was held at the Miller Center at Champlain College in Burlington, VT.

Item 1: Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Haskell moved for approval of the meeting minutes from May 2, 2016. The motion was seconded by Ms. Falcone and approved by the commission.

Item 2: Financial Literacy and Personal Finance for K-12

Mr. Pelletier gave an overview of the document he prepared (attached) regarding educational and curriculum standards in Vermont and potential ways of increasing financial literacy and capability of Vermont K-12 students. The group discussed the current framework in Vermont and possible steps forward in pursuing success and improvement regarding increasing literacy in

personal finance for Vermont students as well as the tools needed at the school-level or statewide levels to assist in this effort. The group discussed possible strategies in accomplishing success.

Commission members discussed the document as well as the barriers that exist for different entities, stakeholders, and interested parties within the K-12 field, as well as the importance of continuing advocacy work in partnerships with any policy recommendations.

The group discussed the importance of understanding statewide information and data to inform the potential recommendations of the commission as well understand what other states have done concerning financial literacy in K-12 students.

The Commission discussed four broad areas in analyzing and crafting a recommendation for K-12 financial literacy:

- A. Policy
- B. Resources
- C. Incentives
- D. Strategy

Item 3: Financial Literacy and Personal Finance for Adults

Ms. Pearce gave an overview of the different programs and initiatives that the Treasurer's Office is working on regarding increasing financial literacy, financial empowerment, and retirement security in adult populations in Vermont. Ms. Pearce noted that there would be more of a focus on at-risk populations with regard to financial literacy outreach in her office and that at-risk populations should be a focus of the Commission as well.

The group noted that the four areas discussed above concerning K-12 would also apply for adult populations:

- A. Policy
- B. Resources
- C. Incentives
- D. Strategy

Ms. Pearce noted to the group that the new Financial Literacy and Outreach Director for the Treasurer's Office would be starting sometime in late June. Further, Ms. Pearce noted that the new director would reach out to Commission members and other Vermont organizations to assist in the pursuit of bettering financial literacy in adult populations as well as the goals and charge of the Commission.

Item 5: Public Comment

No public comment offered.

Item 6: Adjournment

Mr. Pelletier adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

DRAFT Discussion Document

K-12 Briefing Document on the Educational and Curriculum Standards in Vermont

1. ***Educational Quality Standards (EQS)***. State Board Rule 2000, School Quality Standards, was put in place following the passage of Act 60 in 1997, to ensure "all Vermont children will be afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality..." (V.S.A. Title 16, § 165). In 2012 and 2013, the Board of Education (Board) re-examined these rules. In December 2013 the Board approved a new Rule 2000 with updated Education Quality Standards (EQS). The legislature and the Secretary of State's Office approved the new rules which went into effect on April 5, 2014. (See: <http://education.vermont.gov/state-board/rules/2000>)
 - a. Section 2120.5 of the EQS includes Curriculum Content requirements (Pages 8-9 of Rule 2000). The relevant part of the rule states:
 - i. "Each supervisory union board shall ensure the written and delivered curriculum within their supervisory union is aligned with the standards approved by the State Board of Education. Each school shall enable students to engage annually in rigorous, relevant and comprehensive learning opportunities that allows them to demonstrate proficiency in...d. ***global citizenship (including the concepts of civics, economics, geography, world language, cultural studies and history)***..."
 - b. Section 2120.6 of the EQS includes Curriculum Coordination requirements (Page 9 of Rule 2000). The relevant part of the rule states:
 - i. As required in 16 V.S.A. §261a(a)(1), the board of each supervisory union shall ensure that each school implements the supervisory union's written and delivered curriculum, ***which shall be: a. aligned with the standards approved by the State Board of Education...*** We need to confirm that the standards include the Framework and Grade Expectations listed in numbers 2 and 3 below.
2. ***Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities (Framework)***. The Framework was originally released in the fall of 2000. New standards in Mathematics, English Language Arts and Science have replaced the Field of Knowledge Standards in the Framework. Parts of the Framework are still currently in effect, although it is likely to be replaced in the future given its age. The Framework is also supplemented by the Grade Expectations standards described in number 3 below. The purpose of the Framework is

to improve student learning. The standards are used in three ways: (1) to provide a structure from which standards-based district, school, and classroom curriculum can be developed, organized, implemented, and assessed; (2) to provide the basis for the development of a state, local, and classroom comprehensive assessment system; and (3) to make explicit what may be included in statewide assessments of student learning. (see: <http://education.vermont.gov/publications/framework-of-standards>)

- a. *The Framework includes Vital Results Standards that are the responsibility of teachers in all fields of knowledge. Personal Development Standards including Making Decisions--Personal Economics (3.8) and Work Place--Career Choices (3.15) are included in the Framework's Vital Results. The Framework also has Field of Knowledge Standards that including Economic (6.15 to 6.17).*
- b. *We need to confirm that the Framework is a still a required standard with regard to the topics of Personal Economics, Career Choices and Economics.*
3. **Grade Expectations.** The purpose of Grade Expectations are: (1) to provide more specific and detailed benchmarks for Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities; (2) to provide guidance for local curriculum, instruction and assessment; (3) to provide the grade level expectations in math, reading and writing required for state assessment. (See: <http://education.vermont.gov/publications/framework-of-standards>)
Content areas include
 - a. *Family & Consumer Sciences* (see: http://education.vermont.gov/documents/educ_pubs_ge_family_consumer_sciences.pdf). Family and Consumer Sciences offers supplementary standards, despite the fact that this is not a Field of Knowledge identified in the Framework (just like Personal Finance).
 - b. *History & Social Sciences* (includes Economics) (see: <http://education.vermont.gov/history#ge> and click on the relevant grade clusters. Each grade includes a modest level of personal finance topics in the economics section of each grade cluster).
4. **Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements.** Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGRs) are the locally-delineated set of content knowledge and skills connected to state standards that, when supplemented with any additional locally-developed requirements, have been determined to qualify a student for earning a high school diploma. Vermont's Education Quality Standards (EQS) require that schools' graduation requirements be rooted in demonstrations of student proficiency, as opposed to time spent in classrooms. This requirement will take effect in Vermont beginning with the graduating class of 2020. (See: <http://education.vermont.gov/pbgr>)
 - a. **Sample Global Citizenship PBGR:**
http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-PBGR_GC_VT_LP.pdf
5. **Personalized Learning Plans (PLP).** The recent enactment of Personalized Learning Plan requirements through Act 77 will help students achieve academic success, be

prepared for post-secondary opportunities, and engage actively in civic life. Schools will need to ensure that they have designed a PLP process for implementation beginning in the fall of 2015. Schools will be expected to initiate a process for students to identify their goals, learning styles, and abilities and align this with the school's academic expectations and student's pathway toward graduation (see: <http://education.vermont.gov/plp-working-group/main>).

Potential Ways of Increasing Financial Literacy and Capability of Vermont K-12 Students

The following is a list of potential options for increasing the financial literacy of Vermont K-12 students. Much of this list is derived from dialogue at the last Financial Literacy Commission meeting. As background, the general consensus of the attendees at that meeting was that, at this time, given the many educational changes that are occurring in Vermont schools districts (school consolidation, Common Core Math and English implementation including new assessments tests, PBGRs, PLPs, EQS, Flexible Pathways/Dual Enrollment, Social Studies standards revision, etc.) a new financial literacy mandate or graduation credit requirement was not a practical option.

The committee also noted that the Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities and the Economics Grade Expectations currently includes a modest level of required financial literacy concepts required to be taught to all students. The group focused on identifying a list of potential recommendations that would provide resources and support to school districts so that they could more effectively implement existing financial literacy requirements and perhaps clarify and expand upon existing requirements.

The following is a list of potential concepts. It is NOT a list of recommendations from the Commission or its members. This is intended to be merely a discussion document for the commission members at the June meeting.

For background on how other states approach the concept of financial literacy in their schools see: (1) 2015 National Report Card on State Efforts to Improve Financial Literacy in High Schools (<http://www.champlain.edu/centers-of-excellence/center-for-financial-literacy/report-making-the-grade>) and (2) 2016 Survey of the States, Economic and Personal Finance Education In Our Nation's Schools (<http://councilforeconed.org/policy-and-advocacy/survey-of-the-states/>). The National Report Card indicates how other local control state education models (similar to the Vermont system) have successfully implemented financial literacy education (examples include Ohio, Maine, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Maryland, etc.).

The following potential options previously discussed include:

1. *Education Quality Standards*: Could the EQS global citizenship curriculum standard be slightly modified so that it is clear that the word “economics” also includes financial literacy/personal finance topics (e.g. “economics (including personal finance concepts)”)?
2. *Framework/Grade Expectations*: Could financial literacy standards be added as a resource on the Grade Expectations AOE website page for schools districts to consider when they are implementing the Framework required financial literacy standards (similar to Family and Consumer Sciences standards currently on this site)? Two sets of financial literacy national standards exist that have been adopted by many states that could be used for this purpose. See: (1) JumpStart National Standards in K-12 Personal Finance Education (<http://www.jumpstart.org/national-standards.html>); and (2) Council for Economic Education National Standard for Financial Literacy (<http://councilforeconed.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/national-standards-for-financial-literacy.pdf>).
3. *PBGRs*: Could sample PBGRs on financial literacy topics be created and placed on the AOE website?
4. *PLPs*: Could a sample on how school districts could incorporate certain financial literacy topics into PLPs be created and placed on the AOE’s website?
5. *Social Studies Standards revisions*: The AOE, in testimony to the Commission, indicated that the Social Studies Standards were going to be revised, and that such newly created standards would replace the existing Framework social studies standards (as has already been done with English, Math, Science and Physical Education standards in the Framework). The vast majority of states include personal finance concepts/standards in the states’ social studies standards. Could the AOE include certain key personal finance concepts in the social studies standards that are going to be rewritten and submitted to the Board of Education for approval? The current Framework lacks specificity and clear progression of learning in this area (see Vital Results and the topics of Personal Economics and Career Choices).
6. *AOE Financial Education Communication to School Districts*: Could the AOE increase communication with school districts on how they could implement financial literacy education? Could existing AOE resources be allocated toward the purpose of increasing communication with educators and school districts and the development of resources that could be placed on the AOE’s website? Could an AOE point person be identified that would work with stakeholders in this area? Could the AOE have a location on its website with vetted financial literacy resources for use by educators? Champlain College’s Center for Financial Literacy has worked with a group of 11 Vermont high school educators to create a high school website that could serve as a model (see: <http://www.teachfinlit.org/>).
7. *School District Survey*. Currently the AOE does not collect data on how schools are implementing the financial literacy topics included in the Framework as it relates to Personal Economics, Career Choices and Economics. Given this lack of monitoring on

how these requirements are being implemented, could the AOE ask school districts to submit specific information on how they are implementing these education requirements in their school districts?

8. *Educator Training.* Studies and surveys show that educators often lack confidence in their ability to teach personal finance due to their own lack of training on this topic. Could the AOE provide teacher training opportunities on this topic t at school districts (in-service days) and to educators through continuing education opportunities? For a study on Vermont educators and their students covering educator training and student outcomes see Champlain Colleges 2015 Prepped for Success report (see: <http://www.champlain.edu/centers-of-excellence/center-for-financial-literacy/report-prepped-for-success>).
9. *Option for all Vermont Students.* Online delivery of personal finance education currently exists for high school students in the state. Can the AOE request each school district that does not offer that a personal finance elective to inform parents and students of the existence of this optional way to take advantage of personal finance education?
10. *College Loan Training.* Can focused financial literacy training on the topics of career and/or major exploration and the financing of college increase the numbers of students in Vermont seeking postsecondary education after graduating high school (increasing this number is critical to Vermont's economic development and is already a clearly articulated goal of the state)? It was noted that Tennessee requires every student to complete a FAFSA form to graduate from high school and that Texas requires all students to receive training on student loans and the FAFSA process. Could something similar be implemented in Vermont?
11. *Voluntary Assessment Tool.* Could the AOE make available a Personal Finance assessment tool for school districts and educators to use, on a purely voluntary basis, which will help them determine what topics need focus on and what types of instruction methods are successful?
12. *Incentives.* Create incentives for students taking a personal finance course (incentives could be financial or certificates). Create incentives for schools to implement personal finance programming (inceptives could be via grants).
13. *Funding:* Are there any state funding sources that exist for these K-12 financial literacy initiatives? Other states have assessed fees on certain financial institutions: license fees on payday lenders and auto title loan companies; fee charged to the state's bankers based on assets they hold; a percentage of civil money penalties collected by state financial regulators; and a percentage of unclaimed property that is escheated to the state. How can we nurture public-private partnerships to fund financial literacy initiatives and connect those in need of support to these existing resources?