

Glossary of Terms Used in Strategic Plan

21st Century Skills:

While there is much discussion about what exactly are “21st Century Skills”, these skills most commonly named are:

- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Information literacy
- Media literacy
- Technology literacy
- Flexibility
- Leadership
- Initiative
- Productivity
- Social skills

(<https://www.aeseducation.com/careercenter21/what-are-21st-century-skills>)

Achievement Gap:

The disparity in academic performance between groups of students. The achievement gap shows up in grades, standardized-test scores, course selection, dropout rates, and college-completion rates, among other success measures. It is most often used to describe the troubling performance gaps between African-American and Hispanic students, at the lower end of the performance scale, and their non-Hispanic white peers, and the similar academic disparity between students from low-income families and those who are better off. In the past decade, though, scholars and policymakers have begun to focus increasing attention on other achievement gaps, such as those based on sex, English-language proficiency and learning disabilities.

(<https://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/achievement-gap/index.html>)

Collaboration Skills:

The ability to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor.

(<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/collaboration>)

Communities of Practice:

For the purposes of this plan, “communities of practice” is defined as:

- a. Hull Public School educators and support staff (i.e. counselors, school psychologists, therapists, etc.) working together to share ideas and implement new teaching methods, and:
- b. Hull Public School educators and support staff (i.e. counselors, school psychologists, therapists, etc.) working with educators from other school districts to share ideas and implement new teaching methods.

Core Values:

A principle that guides an organization's internal conduct as well as its relationship with the external world. (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/core-values.html>)

Critical Thinking Skills:

A term used by educators to describe forms of learning, thought, and analysis that go beyond the memorization and recall of information and facts. In common usage, critical thinking is an umbrella term that may be applied to many different forms of learning acquisition or to a wide variety of thought processes. In its most basic expression, critical thinking occurs when students are analyzing, evaluating, interpreting, or synthesizing information and applying creative thought to form an argument, solve a problem, or reach a conclusion.

(<https://www.edglossary.org/critical-thinking/>)

Curriculum:

The means to achieve the goals expressed in the standards. It is the teaching and learning program, and can include lesson plans and activities, scope and sequence documents, textbooks, computer programs, and even related pedagogical advice and embedded formative assessments.

(<https://learningfirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/What-we-teach-matters-FINAL-for-publication-15-Nov.pdf>)

Curriculum Frameworks:

The Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks provide teachers, students and families with clear and shared expectations for what all students should know and be able to do at the end of each year. They represent a promise of equitable education for all students. They formalize the expectation that all students in the Commonwealth have access to the same academic content, regardless of their zip code, background, or abilities.

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks exist for:

- History and Social Science (2018)
- English Language Arts and Literacy (2017)
- Mathematics (2017)
- Digital Literacy and Computer Science (2016)
- Science and Technology Engineering (2016)
- Vocational Technical Education (2014)
- Arts (1999)
- Comprehensive Health (1999)
- Foreign Language (1999)

(From the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)

Curriculum Mapping:

The process indexing or diagraming a curriculum to identify and address academic gaps, redundancies, and misalignments for purposes of improving the overall coherence of a course of study and, by extension, its effectiveness (a curriculum, in the sense that the term is typically used by educators, encompasses everything that teachers teach to students in a school or course, including the instructional materials and techniques they use). At the elementary level, products of curriculum mapping are referred to as “Grade-level Scope and Sequences”. At the middle and

high school levels, these documents are referred to as “curriculum maps.”

(<https://www.edglossary.org/curriculum-mapping/>)

Curriculum Review Cycle:

A system through which all curricula is reviewed and mapped at regular intervals.

Differentiation:

A wide variety of teaching techniques and lesson adaptations that educators use to instruct a diverse group of students, with diverse learning needs, in the same course, classroom, or [learning environment](#). The basic idea is that the primary educational objectives—making sure all students master essential knowledge, concepts, and skills—remain the same for every student, but teachers may use different instructional methods to help students meet those expectations.

(<https://www.edglossary.org/differentiation/>)

Diversity:

The condition of having or being composed of differing elements; the inclusion of different types of people (including but not limited to people of different races, ethnicities, religions, abilities, genders, sexual orientations and cultures) in a group or organization.

(<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diversity>)

Essential Skills and Content:

The skills and content standards contained in the Massachusetts Content Frameworks.

Exemplars:

A model, ideal or pattern to be copied or imitated or something typical or representative of an example. Exemplars are usually samples of past work completed by former students who have undertaken work of a specified quality. Exemplars may indicate a grade range and they may be annotated so as to indicate how the exemplar satisfies the stated criteria for assessment.

(<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1053990.pdf>)

Formative Assessment:

Any form of assessment used by an educator to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of particular content and then to adjust instructional practices accordingly toward improving student achievement in that area. (<https://edsources.org/publications/education-glossary>)

Growth Mindset:

The understanding that abilities and intelligence can be developed.



(<https://www.mindsetworks.com/science/>)

Horizontal Alignment

When a curriculum is horizontally aligned or horizontally coherent, what students are learning in one ninth-grade biology course, for example, mirrors what other students are learning in a different ninth-grade biology course. In addition, the assessments, tests, and other methods teachers use to evaluate learning achievement and progress are based on what has actually been taught to students and on the learning standards that the students are expected to meet in a particular course, subject area, or grade level. (<https://www.edglossary.org/coherent-curriculum/>)

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs):

The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a student-directed, multi-year, dynamic tool that maps academic plans, personal/social growth, and career development activities, while taking into account the student's unique, self-defined interests, needs, and goals for the attainment of postsecondary success. (www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/schoolcounseling/ilpguidance2014.docx)

Information Literacy:

Information literacy is a crucial skill in the pursuit of knowledge. It involves recognizing when information is needed and being able to efficiently locate, accurately evaluate, effectively use, and clearly communicate information in various formats. It refers to the ability to navigate the rapidly growing information environment, which encompasses an increasing number of information suppliers, as well as the amount supplied, and includes bodies of professional literature, popular media, libraries, the Internet, and much more. Increasingly, information is available in unfiltered formats, raising questions about its authenticity, validity, and reliability. This abundance of information is of little help to those who have not learned how to use it effectively. (<https://www.wesleyan.edu/libr/infoforyou/infolitdefined.html>)

Instructional Shifts:

Adjustments made in lessons or in curricula that require teachers to shift the focus of their instruction. (i.e. In the Mathematics frameworks, teachers should now focus on the students' acquisition of math practices.) (<https://www.edglossary.org/formative-assessment/>)

International Exchange Program:

Programs (run by such groups as AFS, ISEP and 4-H) that allow students to live and attend school in a foreign country for a set period of time (i.e. one year or semester).

Lifelong Learning:

The provision or use of both formal and informal learning opportunities throughout people's lives in order to foster the continuous development and improvement of the knowledge and skills needed for employment and personal fulfilment.

(<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/lifelong-learning>)

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS):

Standardized assessments that determine if students are meeting the state learning standards expressed in the state frameworks for English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics and Science/Technology/Engineering.

Students earn scores of “Exceeds Expectations”, “Meets Expectations”, “Approaching Expectations” or “Does Not Meet Expectations” on the ELA and Mathematics exams. Students earn scores of “Advanced”, “Proficient”, “Needs Improvement” or “Warning/Failing” on the Science/Technology/Engineering exams.

Schools are required legally to administer the following MCAS exams:

- English Language Arts (ELA) in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10
- Mathematics in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10
- Science in grades 5, 8 and 9/10

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires that students must earn a score of “Exceeds Expectations” or “Meets Expectations” on the grade 9 and 10 MCAS exams in order to receive a high school diploma. (From the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE):

The Department charged with the oversight of all public elementary and secondary schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Mastery-based Learning:

Also known as Competency-based Learning, refers to systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating that they have learned the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education. In public schools, competency-based systems use state [learning standards](#) to determine academic expectations and define “competency” or “[proficiency](#)” in a given course, subject area, or grade level. The general goal of competency-based learning is to ensure that students are acquiring the knowledge and skills that are deemed to be essential to success in school, higher education, careers, and adult life. If students fail to meet expected learning standards, they typically receive additional instruction, practice time, and [academic support](#) to help them achieve competency or meet the expected standards. (<https://www.edglossary.org/competency-based-learning/>)

Media Literacy:

The process of understanding and using the mass media in an assertive and non-passive way. This includes an informed and critical understanding of the nature of the media, the techniques used by them and the impact of these techniques.

(<http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/language-media-literacy-glossary-terms>)

Mission Statement:

A written declaration of an organization's core purpose and focus that normally remains unchanged over time. Properly crafted mission statements (1) serve as filters to separate what is important from what is not, (2) clearly state which markets will be served and how, and (3) communicate a sense of intended direction to the entire organization. A mission is different from a vision in that the former is the cause and the latter is the effect; a mission is something to be accomplished whereas a vision is something to be pursued for that accomplishment.

(<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/mission-statement.html>)

Practical Applications:

The use of something for a reasonable purpose (i.e. using a school math lesson to figure out the total cost of items while grocery shopping). (<https://www.yourdictionary.com/practical-application>)

Problem Solving Skills:

The process of working through details of a problem to reach a solution. Problem solving may include mathematical or systematic operations and can be a gauge of an individual's critical thinking skills. (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/problem-solving.html>)

Self-directed Learning:

In its broadest meaning, self-directed learning describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. (Knowles, 1975, p. 18) (<http://infed.org/mobi/self-directed-learning/>)

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):

The process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified the following five competency clusters that are interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies:



(<http://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2016/2016-04/spec-item1-SEL-definitions.pdf>)

Standards:

Expressions of the goals of student learning at the state or federal level. Standards typically aim to outline what we expect students to know and be able to do at different stages of schooling, usually expressed in level years.

(<https://learningfirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/What-we-teach-matters-FINAL-for-publication-15-Nov.pdf>)

Standards-based:

Systems of instruction, [assessment](#), grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating understanding or mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education. In schools that use standards-based approaches to educating students, learning standards—i.e., concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education—determine the goals of a lesson or course, and teachers then determine how and what to teach students so they achieve the learning expectations described in the standards. (<https://www.edglossary.org/standards-based/>)

Standardized Assessments:

Any form of test that (1) requires all test takers to answer the same questions, or a selection of questions from a common bank of questions, in the same way, and that (2) is scored in a “standard” or consistent manner, which makes it possible to compare the relative performance of individual students or groups of students. (<https://www.edglossary.org/standardized-test/>)

Summative Assessment:

Assessments used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period. These tests, assignments, or projects are used to determine whether students have learned what they were expected to learn. Summative assessments are given at the conclusion of a specific instructional period, and therefore they are generally evaluative, rather than diagnostic. (<https://www.edglossary.org/summative-assessment/>)

Technology Literacy:

Technology Literacy is the ability of an individual, working independently and with others, to responsibly, appropriately and effectively use technology tools to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create and communicate information.

(<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/techlit/docs/Definition%20of%20Technology%20Literacy.pdf>)

Tier One Interventions:

Powerful classroom instruction begins with the adoption and use of an evidence-based curriculum, but effective teachers do not simply teach such a program page-by-page in the same way for all students. Rather, they differentiate instruction, providing instruction designed to meet the specific needs of students in the class.

(<http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/tieredinstruction/tier1>)

Vertical Alignment:

When a curriculum is vertically aligned or vertically coherent, what students learn in one lesson, course, or grade level prepares them for the next lesson, course, or grade level. Teaching is purposefully structured and logically sequenced so that students are learning the knowledge and skills that will progressively prepare them for more challenging, higher-level work.

(<https://www.edglossary.org/coherent-curriculum/>)

Vision Statement:

An aspirational description of what an organization would like to achieve or accomplish in the mid-term or long-term future. It is intended to serve as a clear guide for choosing current and future courses of action. (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/vision-statement.html>)

Weighted Grade Point Average:

Weighted grades are number or letter grades that are assigned a numerical advantage when calculating a [grade point average](#), or GPA. In some schools, primarily public high schools, weighted-grade systems give students a numerical advantage for grades earned in higher-level courses or more challenging learning experiences, such as [honors courses](#), Advanced Placement courses, or International Baccalaureate courses. (<https://www.edglossary.org/weighted-grades/>)

