

21st Century Skills in West Virginia

2008

PARTNERSHIP FOR
21ST CENTURY SKILLS

As the world becomes more competitive and complex, our nation's future depends on the education of our young people. West Virginia is deeply engaged in systemically transforming its public school system with the goal of providing all West Virginia children with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to excel in a fiercely competitive global world.



West Virginia's 21st Century Learning initiative is focused on the development of internationally rigorous and relevant curriculum standards (including content, learning skills, and technical tool skills); a balanced assessment strategy; research-based instructional practices; a parallel accountability system; aligned teacher preparation programs; the development of a 21st century leadership continuum; emphasis on pre-K programs; and the integration of technology tools in every classroom.

West Virginia educators, policymakers, business leaders and parents are dedicated to creating a system that prepares students with the necessary 21st century skills, personal dispositions and deep understanding of rigorous core curriculum necessary for success in the 21st century. To develop graduates of 21st century schools who are the best-prepared generation in history, West Virginia has developed the following initiatives:

21ST CENTURY SKILLS INITIATIVES

1 Teach 21 Web site

Teach 21 is a comprehensive Web resource designed by teachers working collaboratively with the West Virginia Department of Education. The Web site assists colleagues in planning and delivering effective 21st century instruction in West Virginia classrooms. At the heart of the integration of content, learning skills and technology tool standards is student achievement. The Teach 21 Web site is a valuable tool for classroom teachers and professional development providers. The interactive West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives are linked to instructional guides and lessons online. Four instructional guides are currently available at each grade level in the content areas of reading, English, mathematics, science and social studies.

<http://wvde.state.wv.us/teach21>

2 From Classroom to Classroom: 21st Century Guide for New Teachers

This Web-based resource was designed as a tool to help both mentors and new teachers improve their work, their methods for communicating and their instructional delivery in the 21st century. The Web-based tool was designed and created by 30 educators, including pre-service teachers, new teachers and experienced teachers. On the site, teachers can access support on such topics as classroom management, special needs, instruction, parent outreach, communication and leadership. These resources deliver information about West Virginia's 21st Century Learning initiative through wikis, podcasts, videos and blogs. The information also is available to schools, counties, and Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) as well as colleges and universities.

<http://wvde.state.wv.us/mentorship>

3 West Virginia Teacher Leadership Institute

The West Virginia Department of Education's Teacher Leadership Institute is designed to strengthen, support and further develop the leadership skills of classroom teachers. The 550 participants in each annual institute are continually supported through follow-up webinars presented by the Teacher Leadership Institute staff, county team meetings and a two-day follow-up. The integration of all institute participants within the local school system into one team is critical to capacity building at the county level.

4 Creating a 21st Century Leadership Development and Support Continuum

The West Virginia Leadership Development and Support Collaborative is an initiative designed to build consensus among educational leaders in attracting, preparing, developing and supporting 21st century teacher, principal and superintendent leaders. The collaborative is co-chaired by the State Superintendent of Schools, the President of the West Virginia Board of Education, the Chancellor of the State Higher Education Policy Commission, Secretary of Education and the Arts, and the Chairs of the West Virginia House and Senate Education Committees. Members of the collaborative will be selected from West Virginia entities with a primary interest in the development and support of educational leadership in West Virginia as well as the authority to influence change in current practice and policy.

5 21st Century Model High Schools

The West Virginia Department of Education and the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center at Edvantia are collaborating on an instructional appraisal project that will provide staff at the West Virginia Department of Education with information on the instructional program in 17 targeted high schools. In this project, Edvantia's Instruction and Learning Appraisal was used to collect data on the status of instruction in each school. The goals of the appraisal project are to determine what West Virginia high schools need to do to achieve the framework for high performing 21st century high schools; determine the readiness of West Virginia high schools to implement the 21st Century Learning initiative; and identify promising practices for 21st century teaching and learning at the high school level.

6 techSteps

techSteps is a program that provides planning, teaching and assessment of K-8 technology literacy. After determining that a multiple choice test would not provide evidence in a 21st century learning environment of technology literacy, the West Virginia Department of Education searched for quality 21st century learning and assessment of technology literacy. After months of searching for the appropriate program and with input from a national advisory committee, the WVDE has partnered with SchoolKit to implement techSteps. Beginning with 13 pilot districts in the fall of 2007, the program will be moved to all K-8 schools in West Virginia in the fall of 2008. Authentic assessment through techSteps is possible because students build their own information products using real-world software applications. techSteps allows teachers to plan, teach and assess K-8 technology literacy in an integrated 21st century context, reflecting the new models of active learning and higher order thinking that are essential to a 21st century learning environment.

http://www.techsteps.com/pub/doc/Ghv37v84/techSteps_Brochure.pdf

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills is the leading advocacy organization focused on infusing 21st century skills into education. The organization brings together the business community, education leaders and policymakers to define a powerful vision for 21st century education to ensure every child's success as citizens and workers in the 21st century. The Partnership encourages schools, districts and states to advocate for the infusion of 21st century skills into education and provides tools and resources to help facilitate and drive change.