

## ***Vermont's Vision for Learning Technology***

*The aim of 21st century education is **learning** — creative, powerful, personal, and open-ended in our lives. Technology should be the water, ever-present yet almost invisible, in which our students' learning swims.*

Nearly all our workplaces have been transformed by technology, and this change continues alongside the near-constant creation of new knowledge, new careers, and new industries. We can't know for sure today what job-specific knowledge and skills our young people will need when they join the workforce; but we can be confident in knowing what underlying skills and learning experiences will equip them to succeed, and to contribute as citizens, in this fast-evolving century.

Our young people must learn to communicate, to collaborate, to work creatively, to embrace new technologies, and to continue gaining new knowledge and educating themselves throughout their lives. With Vermont's strong learning-technology infrastructure, our state is positioned to meet this challenge, to give our K-12 students the chance to thrive in today's globalized learning environment. But the intensity of this environment, and the competitive challenges our graduates will face, demand that we act boldly and with vision to shape our schools into true centers for 21st century learning.

**Good teaching makes learning possible and powerful for all students — and technology supports and empowers good teaching.** Yet too often, for a variety of reasons, we separate teaching and technology from each other in our schools. Vermont's vision is for technology to play a much stronger role, to be interwoven within the processes of teaching and learning. When schools and teachers engage all students in using technology effectively, not just to do old tasks in speedier ways but to help them think, create, and communicate in new ways, then educational technology becomes integrative and transforming.

Good teachers understand that technology “can be a means to access content on any topic, a tool for thinking and creating, a connection to peers and experts, and a window into other cultures” (*Maximizing the Impact: The Pivotal Role of Technology in a 21st Century Education System*, State Education Technology Directors Assoc. (SETDA), 2007). Good teachers use this understanding to enhance the work they do in classrooms, bringing new relevancy and authenticity to the subjects they teach.

### **Twenty-first century learning engages students through technology in these key ways:**

- Students learn actively, engaging in and completing projects about which they have cause to care.
- Students work together, in pairs and groups, meeting challenges that call on their creativity.
- Students interact and communicate with others — peers, educators, and experts within or outside school — and they build the feedback they receive into their work.
- Students access information in virtually limitless ways.
- Schools embrace technology as a powerful force in students' lives, and open new doors to accessibility.
- Adults in schools are open to seeing relevant uses within the classroom for the technology tools that students are using outside school.

When these connections are woven schoolwide between good teaching, thoughtful uses of technology, and appreciation for the relevancy of global access to information and communication, then we have truly begun to transform our schools for the 21st century, and for all our students' futures.

**This is Vermont's vision. It's simple and powerful. And its time is now.**