

21st Century Skills in Wisconsin

PARTNERSHIP FOR
21ST CENTURY SKILLS

State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster is leading Wisconsin's 21st century skills initiative. Accelerating technological change, rapidly accumulating knowledge, increasing global competition and rising workforce requirements make 21st century skills essential for every student's success.

"The single best investment we can make is in our children. Educated children become educated adults, who participate in the social, economic and civic life of their community. To remain competitive, Wisconsin realized that it must invest in its human capital to ensure that its students pursue rigorous study that prepares them for the 21st century."

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A QUALITY
EDUCATION
FOR EVERY
CHILD

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

21ST CENTURY SKILLS INITIATIVES

I Global Literacy

Wisconsin's citizens need to be globally literate to understand the linkage of economies, peoples and cultures around the world, and to function comfortably and effectively in other languages and cultures. The State Superintendent and Governor convened the Statewide International Education Council in 2002. For almost five years the Council has led Wisconsin's efforts to bring international perspectives and skills to PK-16 education. Visible events include: the development of five Regional Leadership Alliances, each with business and education co-chairs; an International Education Summit (January 2005) to gather a broad range of perspectives to help shape recommendations for internationalizing education; and publication of the recommendations stating five key goals:

- Global literacies for all students
- World languages for all students
- Global training for all teachers
- Intercultural experiences for all citizens
- International linkages for Wisconsin businesses and government

Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction is also connecting to educators and communities in France, Germany, Japan and Thailand. These official collaborations lead to many opportunities for schools to bring broad perspectives to all subject areas and to prepare students for living beyond their customary borders.

2 Summit on 21st Century Skills

After adopting the Partnership for 21st Century Skills' Framework for 21st Century Learning in January 2007, state business and education leaders convened a Summit on 21st Century Skills to ensure that students develop the knowledge and skills needed for the 21st century workforce. Through small group discussions, leaders of business and commerce, community organizations, and government agencies expressed their expectations for Wisconsin's PK-16 education system.

A leading question was posed to 18 table groups for discussion: If you were to advise an 8th grade student in preparing him/her to work for your company 5-10 years from now, what are the skills, knowledge and abilities you believe would be essential to develop? The information gathered at the summit will help shape revisions to Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards.

3 High School Task Force

The goal of Wisconsin's High School Task Force is to ensure Wisconsin's high school students graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in postsecondary education, the workplace, and as citizens of our 21st century global society.

The State Superintendent convened a High School Task Force chaired by a high school principal and a business leader. Task force members included educators from high schools, technical colleges, colleges and universities, as well as state legislators and representatives of community organizations, business associations, parent organizations and advocacy groups.

The task force examined trend data both for communities in Wisconsin and high school students, especially data highlighting the transition and preparation of high school students into their careers or postsecondary education. The Department of Public Instruction then convened a forum for stakeholders to discuss how to implement the recommendations.

4 Personal Financial Literacy Standards

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, in collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions, convened a Personal Financial Literacy Task Force comprised of business and education leaders from across the state to develop academic standards for personal financial literacy that will help students learn to make wise financial decisions. The task force identified seven main content standards: relating income and education; money management; credit and debt management; planning, saving, and investing; becoming a critical consumer; community and financial responsibility; and risk management.

To implement these standards, Wisconsin's Department of Financial Institutions created a fund and partnered with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to offer Financial Literacy Innovation Awards to support content integration, innovative strategies, and related activities. Individual teachers, partnering with communities, apply for grants to support implementation of the standards so that Wisconsin's youth become financially literate citizens.

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.