

The Vermont Constitution requires the South Burlington School District to provide a public education, and state and federal law require the District to provide such an education to all students, regardless of ability or need.

But it is not just legal mandates that drive the District to seek to maximize the potential of all our students. In Vermont, and nationwide, there is an economic imperative to ensuring that we do so. The economy has changed. Students who drop out of school or receive only a high school degree no longer have the employment opportunities that will allow them to prosper. The employment opportunities require students to possess different abilities and skills than in the past. This reality is reflected in the District's Ends Policy, which sets forth the goals that our "students successfully complete their education from the South Burlington School District ready for their next step" and that "all graduates will be prepared for college, career, or individually determined next steps."

To meet these goals, the District must work with our students as we receive them. We need to help all students be ready to learn and maximize their potential. That means that we must often provide services to students that typically are thought of as being handled by social services agencies. For example, the District uses school-based clinicians to provide individual- and family-centered services that address a student's academic, personal, and mental health needs. These services include referrals, counseling, crisis intervention, therapeutic groups, and classroom-based assistance.

The District must also provide special education services to ensure that all students are ready for their next step in life. The goal is for every student to participate fully in instruction and to be provided with optimal learning environments.

Opportunities are available in our schools for all academic levels to allow all students to maximize their potential. The High School provides numerous honors-level courses and also Advanced Placement courses to allow students to complete college-level studies. The District's high school students may also take classes at area colleges and universities through a dual enrollment program. In the Middle and High Schools, numerous extracurricular activities are provided to expand the students' learning and experiences.

The District is tasked with producing productive citizens. And we must seek to accomplish this for all our students. We are no longer in a position where students who do not receive an appropriate education can readily make a living in low-skilled manufacturing or other such jobs. In short, we are investing in educational opportunities, including social services, special education, advanced courses, and extracurricular activities, to ensure we are enabling all students to reach their potential and contribute to society.