

Framework for State Action on Global Education



PARTNERSHIP FOR
21ST CENTURY SKILLS

REPORT SPONSORS:

P21 would like to thank the following organizations for their generous support of this publication.



ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP FOR 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) is a national organization that advocates 21st century readiness for every student. As the United States competes in a global economy that demands innovation, P21 and its members provide tools and resources to help the U.S. education system keep up and pull ahead by fusing the 3Rs (core academic subjects and 21st century themes) and 4Cs (critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration and creativity and innovation).

While leading districts and schools are already implementing innovative models, P21 advocates for local, state and federal policies that support this approach for every school.

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INTRODUCTION:

GLOBAL EDUCATION AND PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THEIR FUTURES

It is difficult to have a conversation about education in America today without the phrase “college and career ready.” While the means to a great education are often debated in state capitals and local board of education meetings, the goal for K-12 education is rarely in dispute: To prepare students for their next steps into college, the workforce or the military and equip them with the skills to fully participate in their communities and our democracy.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) has advocated for more than a decade that in order to be ready for college and careers students need both proficiency in the core subjects as well as the ability to think critically, problem solve, communicate, collaborate, create, and innovate. In short, students must have knowledge and be able to apply it to predictable and unpredictable real-world challenges.

P21 has also argued to ensure that high school graduates are prepared for 21st century citizenship. In today’s world, citizenship has an increasingly broad and active meaning. It is not just about making informed choices in local, state and national elections. It is about having the understanding, tools and propensity to engage in civic life. Students prepared to fully participate in their communities have the following attributes:

1. Literacy in civics.
2. Proficiency in core academic subjects and interdisciplinary knowledge including environmental, financial, economic, business, health, and entrepreneurial literacy.
3. Capability to safely, intelligently, productively, and responsibly participate in the digital world.
4. Be informed, engaged, and active.
5. Be empowered by global competencies and international understanding.

On the first four attributes, P21 has witnessed great strides and sees real promise in the efforts of states and districts to address the needs and preparation of students. On the fifth—global competence and international education—P21 has seen less cause for celebration.

This is not due to a lack of action. Individual teachers, schools, and school districts are providing promising models in classrooms and in schools in states across the nation. However, those actions are often isolated. What are lacking are comprehensive and sustainable state strategies for moving global education and international understanding into the lifeblood of classroom instruction and the educational experience for all students.

There are state commissions, task forces, and policy reports that extol the importance of international education and the need for students to have greater access to and knowledge of global issues. Far less prevalent are actionable frameworks and strategies for state leadership and implementation.

P21’s Framework for State Action on Global Education has been built to focus on this need. It is focused on the how, not the why.

States including Wisconsin, West Virginia, and North Carolina, as well as the U.S. Departments of State and Education, the Asia Society, the National Education Association, and the organizations represented on the Partnership for 21st Century Skills have all articulated the importance of global competence and international understanding on the readiness of students for college, work, and life, and on the economic competitiveness of our states and country. The evidence is clear, the verdict is in and the jury has spoken.

States require an actionable framework for making global education a clear, but seamless part of state education systems—so that every parent, employer, and policymaker can assume global education is part of every child’s experience in the classroom and the greater educational enterprise.

P21 believes that students should develop the attitudes, skills, and knowledge to understand and participate in a globally connected world. This includes the capacity to:

- Explore their own cultures, make comparisons with other cultures and investigate global issues and challenges.

- Improve their critical thinking, problem solving, perspective-taking, and research skills.
- Develop awareness of cultural diversity and global issues.

To ensure students are prepared to effectively innovate, compete, collaborate, communicate and address complex issues in a global society, teachers must:

- Create and sustain creative learning environments.
- Continually develop understanding of and applications for inquiry-based pedagogical approaches.
- Integrate global content into classroom instruction.
- Utilize next-generation technologies in curricular practices.¹

Building from this foundation, P21's Global Education Framework provides a series of essential elements and actions that support teachers in reaching levels of global competence that enhance students' preparation for college, careers, and life.

The P21 Global Education Framework is intended to serve as a starting point or template for state leaders to build their states' respective strategies and sets of actions on global education. To that end, the framework offers areas of focus and corresponding actions to speed state actions, which can't come soon enough for students.

1. Student and teacher global competency definitions drawn from VIF International Education. The appendix includes a more expansive definition from VIF.

FROM P21'S REIMAGINING CITIZENSHIP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: A CALL TO ACTION FOR POLICYMAKERS AND EDUCATORS

An increasingly international, interdependent, and diverse world rewards people with global competencies and understanding, such as the ability to make local-to-global connections, recognize divergent perspectives, think critically and creatively about global challenges, and collaborate respectfully in heterogeneous forums.

Globalization, accelerated by advances in technology, has fundamentally altered our civic, economic and social lives. Communities and workplaces are much more diverse, in terms of language, culture, heritage, and more—and that diversity creates a mosaic of ways of looking at and living in the world. Multinational companies serve international markets and operate globally, often customizing products and services for different markets. Local events in any corner of the world can ripple in a flash into international repercussions—and the United States is engaged as a leader on the world stage on multiple fronts.

Global citizenship is an element of citizenship readiness that requires a global skill set, including social and cross-cultural skills, proficiency in languages other than English, and an understanding of economic and political forces that affect society.

BELIEFS THAT ANCHOR THE P21 FRAMEWORK

A challenge to developing an actionable framework is to not make priorities and actions overly broad so that implementation appears impossible. Good frameworks are built on findings and beliefs that lead to not just action but also to impact. What follows are six beliefs that anchor P21's **Framework for State Action on Global Education**:

1) Focus on teachers: for students to be global, teachers must be global.

Teachers are ultimately responsible for infusing classroom instruction with global themes and international understanding. To do so, they need preparation, experiences and on-going support to develop global competence in themselves and their students. Instructional materials and supports, digital tools and access to fellow teachers are needed to support the global competence and instructional approaches of classroom teachers.

2) Transform and leverage language learning.

The dominant approach to language learning in the United States—one period a day for 180 days per year in high school and sometimes middle school—has been proven to be inadequate. It simply does not provide enough time on task. To increase language proficiency in this country, we need a new strategy. At the same time, our existing infrastructure of language courses and teachers provides ready-to-use resources for increasing access to global education.

3) Use networks to share knowledge and build commitment.

The advent of the digital age has accelerated the role of networks in building communities, disseminating knowledge, allowing iterative learning opportunities and driving shared practice. These trusted networks can be powerful tools for teachers, schools and districts to drive global education efforts. States have clear roles to play in creating and coordinating this work.

4) Harness the power of global experiences.

Teachers will tell you that you don't really understand what it means to teach until you are in the classroom. Likewise, it can be hard to understand global realities until you experience it for yourself in another country. Significantly increasing global experiences for teachers, administrators, and students—whether through exchange opportunities, travel or virtual interactions—is critical to building understanding of and commitment to global education.

5) Recognize partners are needed to make progress.

State leadership on global education is necessary, but not sufficient to ensure robust implementation of a comprehensive strategy. Local and statewide corporations, foundations, political leaders, universities, advocates, and other implementation partners are important to a global education agenda. State departments and school districts need champions in their respective communities that speak to the importance of global education efforts, as well as lend continuing support through political transitions.

6) Move past pilots: focus on scale, sustainability and equity of access.

A handful of "lighthouse" or "beacon" programs or schools do not make a global education agenda. Pilot programs often become the entirety of the action because a plan and the scalable infrastructure to support it are not built from the beginning. Further, pilots generally provide additional resources to already advantaged communities and students because those schools and districts are already set up to succeed. A state plan should carefully consider how to ensure students in communities who most need global education will be provided access.

FRAMEWORK FOR STATE ACTION ON GLOBAL EDUCATION

The P21 Framework includes six essential elements for state leadership on global competence and international understanding. The framework borrows heavily from recent work in member state North Carolina, where the State Board of Education’s Global Education Task Force adopted the recommendations for action.

It is the intent of the framework that these elements and actions—adapted and augmented to meet local contexts—be implemented as a comprehensive strategy. This is a fixed menu, not a buffet. That said, the scale, sequence, relative focus on specific elements, and funding approaches will differ from state to state.

It is important that states employ the framework as a comprehensive approach to making global education part of the daily reality of students’ and teachers’ lives and an integral component to ensuring students graduate high school prepared for the demands of college, career, and citizenship.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 1: Adopt Global Competency Standards for Students and Teachers

- ◆ **Adopt definitions of student and teacher global competency to anchor state and district global education agendas.** By defining global competency, state boards of education make clear the knowledge and skills that state efforts in global education are meant to build. Standards for teacher and student competency are the crucial foundation upon which a coherent and comprehensive global education agenda is built. [See Appendix for P21’s recommended teacher and student global competency definitions.]

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 2: Effective and Scalable Teacher Support, Resources, and Tools

- ◆ **Provide content for teachers to embed global themes and problem-based learning that focuses on global issues, with a priority on the core subjects.** Make content available through relevant state digital repositories of curriculum and instruction resources. Support the production of teacher-developed content and tools and provide access to teachers

within and across state borders.

- ◆ **Implement a recognition system—such as digital badging—for teachers, principals, and school district instructional support personnel to support and inspire professional development on global issues and competencies.** States would align badging systems with their own systems of licensure, endorsements and certificates. In addition, badging systems can provide the technical infrastructure to sustain partnerships among and across institutions by providing a common platform for various professional growth opportunities.
- ◆ **Require teacher preparation institutions to include expectations for infusing instruction with global content and competencies.** Provide access for institutions of higher education to state curriculum and instruction repositories.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 3: A New Approach to Language Instruction

- ◆ **Institute a statewide dual language/immersion plan that begins in elementary school and continues through high school.** The plan would identify state and local roles for implementation and support and the target languages—and make dual language/immersion the articulated strategy for achieving second language proficiency.
- ◆ **Refocus traditional high school credit world language courses to include a greater emphasis on the study of global and international affairs and the economies, societies and cultures of other nations, and on survival language skills.** These courses would dramatically increase the goals for international understanding, as well as include survival skills goals for language acquisition.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 4: Whole-School Models

- ◆ **Develop new school models focused on international education that would include, but not be limited to, internationally themed schools, transformation models for low-performing schools, virtual schools-within-a-school and regional dual**

language/immersion schools. Whole-school models focused on international themes bring community attention to the importance of preparing students for the global realities of their futures. New schools must include curricular resources, ongoing principal and teacher development, and the involvement of key partners.

- ◆ **Recruit business, foundation and nonprofit partners to support and assist school districts with the implementation of new school models.** Local communities and companies should play leading roles in supporting the funding and implementation needs of new school models, along with state and local governments.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 5: Networking and Recognizing Districts, Schools, and Educators

- ◆ **Create a network of districts, schools and educators to drive implementation and innovation.** Support the dissemination of tools and knowledge that support district-, school- and classroom-level implementation of global content, teacher support, language instruction, and new school models. Use the networks to create a sense of community and commitment among participants.
- ◆ **Institute recognition (designation) programs for students, teachers, principals, schools and districts that provide incentives for educators and educational leaders to adopt innovative global education practices.** Students, teachers, and administrators deserve recognition for the pursuit and achievement of global competency. Recognition

(designation) creates motivation and, more importantly, builds a community of recognized experts in the field. These experts become leaders, advocates, and supports for their peers.


- ◆ **Identify an existing or develop a new leading partner outside of government to drive the global education agenda. State departments of education need strong organizational partners that can take the reins of programmatic and strategy implementation.** Partners also bring expertise, networks and personnel capacity. Finally, they create a place for private philanthropic support and boost implementation capacity at the state level.
- ◆ **Partner state departments of education and commerce (and other relevant agencies) to develop county- or community-level profiles of international assets.** Many communities do not know how global they already are or what assets they have locally. Local profiles detail important characteristics of the community including the international focuses of local businesses, languages spoken and countries represented.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 6: Global Experiences for Students and Educators

- ◆ **Provide global experiences for teachers, administrators and students.** Develop policies that provide support for and commitment to global experiences for educators and students (and even leaders, school board members and decision makers), and identify funding partners (corporate and family foundations), and program partners (nonprofits,

WISCONSIN GLOBAL EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT CERTIFICATE:

In spring of 2014, Wisconsin awarded its first Global Education Achievement Certificates to graduating high school students who demonstrate strong interests in global citizenship. Recipients of the certificate, known as Global Scholars, must take four years of a world language and four credits of globally connected classes in literature, history, social studies, mathematics, or the arts. Students also complete extracurricular and community service projects connected to a global community or global issue. Across Wisconsin, there are 22 high schools in 20 school districts that participate in the Wisconsin Global Schools Network. Each school has adopted a local Global Education Achievement policy that defines requirements for students to earn the Global Education Achievement Certificate. Local policies are based on a voluntary model policy developed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Wisconsin is the first state in the nation with a defined path for students to gain world language skills and cultural opportunities to frame issues in global contexts.



universities, travel organizations) that can support and coordinate travel opportunities for educators and students. These experiences may take a number of forms, including:

- **Inbound teacher exchanges.** Teacher exchanges help internationalize schools by bringing in individuals—and their cultures and perspectives—from other countries. Teachers in programs like the J-1 exchange visa come with teaching experience and stay for three years before being required to return to their home countries.
- **Outbound educational travel and exchanges for teachers and students.** Opportunities for students and teachers to experience other countries and cultures firsthand will both benefit them and their school communities. Upon returning, they bring experiences valuable to their schools—and commitments to share perspectives in their classrooms and school programs.
- **Virtual classroom-to-classroom exchanges.** Technology enables interaction with students and teachers from other countries in both asynchronous and synchronous ways. Developing relationships with schools and classrooms from other countries leads to virtual global experiences for students and educators that provide windows into other cultures and perspectives.
- **Global Academic competitions.** Global competitions provide teachers and students with opportunities to engage with international peers at home and abroad. Examples include Destination Imagination’s Global Finals, where students from around the world are engaged in cultural exchanges. Students from foreign countries are paired together with U.S. teams during a four-day competition, providing academic and cultural interactions.

CONCLUSION

The P21 Framework for State Action on Global Education is designed to support states that have a history of action in global education and those that are just beginning to build or explore global education agendas. Wherever a state may be on the implementation continuum, the framework provides a comprehensive but achievable set of activities to execute on as quick a pace as state leadership and implementation capacity will allow.



APPENDIX A

GLOBAL TEACHER AND STUDENT COMPETENCIES

P21 believes it is critical for states and districts to adopt definitions for global-ready teachers and students that provide foundations and guides for efforts to build global competence and understanding. P21 suggests states use the following [definitions that were originally created by VIF International Education](#).


GLOBAL-READY TEACHERS prepare students for successful citizenship and competitiveness in an increasingly interconnected world. The characteristics of distinguished global-ready teachers can be represented across four learning spirals: understanding, investigating, connecting, and integrating.

- Global-ready teachers understand learning theory applications, innovative uses of digital tools that support learning and the importance of incorporating global contexts and perspectives into classroom instruction.
- Global-ready teachers research, design, and synthesize innovative curriculum, technology tools and best practices from diverse sources to implement and integrate global content into classroom instruction.
- Global-ready teachers collaborate and communicate effectively and respectfully with diverse colleagues in their schools and in external learning communities.
- Global-ready teachers synthesize best practices across the core areas of teaching expertise: pedagogy, global content, and technology.
- Global-ready teachers integrate global attitudes, skills, and knowledge into curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Global-ready teachers are leaders in their schools and external learning communities in the core areas of teaching expertise: pedagogy, global content, and technology.

GLOBAL-READY STUDENTS develop the attitudes, skills and, knowledge to understand and participate in a globally connected world. Specifically, students:

- Explore their own cultures, make comparisons with other cultures and investigate global issues and challenges.
- Improve their critical thinking, problem solving, perspective-taking, and research skills.
- Develop awareness of cultural diversity and global issues.

By the end of their K-12 careers, global-ready students are able to develop and apply critical cultural frameworks in their investigations and learning about global society, geography, environment, economy, and politics.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Taskforce Members

David Young (Chair), VIF International Education
Bill Bland, People to People Ambassador Programs
J.B. Buxton, VIF International Education
Chuck Cadle, Destination Imagination
Monica Cougan, ENA
Cliff Green, Learning.com
Nassim Lewis, Intel Corporation
Randy Sinisi, EF Education First
Helen Soulé, P21
Cheri Sterman, Crayola
Sinem Vatanartiran, Bahcesehir K-12 Schools
Kathy Welling, EF Education First
Kevin Wesolowski, P21

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U.S. Fund for UNICEF
VIF International Education
The Walt Disney Company

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