

## **Appendix C**

### **21st Century Skills**



## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills is a unique public-private organization whose work is supported by the U.S. Department of Education and promotes the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act. Founding members of the Partnership include Apple, Cable in the Classroom, Cisco, Dell, Microsoft, NEA, SAP, and the Time Warner Foundation.

The goal of the Partnership is to define and incorporate into learning the skills that are necessary for students to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To this end, the Partnership has identified the following six elements as critical for creating 21<sup>st</sup> century learning:

### 1. Emphasize core subjects

The core subjects provide a foundation for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The No Child Left Behind Act identifies the following as core subjects: English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics, government, economics, arts, history, and geography.

### 2. Emphasize learning skills

In addition to core subjects, students need to develop the necessary skills to continue as lifelong learners:

- information and communication skills
- thinking and problem solving skills
- interpersonal and self-directional skills

### 3. Use 21<sup>st</sup> century tools to develop learning skills.

Students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be proficient the use of 21<sup>st</sup> century tools including:

- information and communication technologies
- computers, networking, and other technologies
- audio, video, and other media and multimedia tools

### 4. Teach and learn in a 21<sup>st</sup> century context.

Students learn academic content best when teachers create an environment that:

- makes content relevant to student lives
- brings the world into the classroom
- takes students out into the world
- creates opportunities for students to interact with each other, with teachers, and with other knowledgeable adults in authentic learning experiences

## **5. Teach and learn 21<sup>st</sup> century content**

Educators and business leaders have identified additional content areas essential for student success in the community and in the workplace:

- global awareness
- financial, economic, and business literacy
- civic literacy

## **6. Use 21<sup>st</sup> century assessments that measure 21<sup>st</sup> century skills**

Teachers and schools must balance standardized testing and classroom assessments.

- standardized tests must measure both core subjects and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills
- standardized tests must be balanced appropriately with classroom assessments to measure the full range of the students' skills in a timely way
- classroom assessments must be strengthened and integrated with the instructional process to reinforce learning, provide immediate feedback and help students learn core subjects and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills

The Partnership recommends nine steps to build momentum for integrating 21<sup>st</sup> century skills:

1. Embrace a powerful vision of public education that includes 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
2. Align leadership, management and resources with educational goals.
3. Use this tool to assess where schools are now.
4. Develop priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
5. Develop a professional development plan for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
6. Make sure students have equitable access to 21<sup>st</sup> century education.
7. Begin developing assessments to measure student progress in 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
8. Collaborate with outside partners.
9. Plan collectively and strategically for the future.

Additional information and reports by the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills are available on the web at <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org>