

For Immediate Release  
Contact: Ted Fisher  
[ted.fisher@vermont.gov](mailto:ted.fisher@vermont.gov)  
802-595-5562

**Vermont PBS Continues Partnership with Vermont Agency of Education  
to Support Vermont's Summer Enrichment Initiative**

*Literacy and STEM Learning Kits to support Recovery efforts for children and their families over  
the summer*

Winooski, VT – July 7, 2021 – Vermont PBS today announced the continuation of its highly successful partnership with the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) to provide curriculum support to Vermont schools. Since April of 2020, Vermont PBS has partnered with AOE to sustain and enhance learning for PreK-12 students with support from the Vermont Department of Libraries (VDL). Recently the AOE allocated \$50,000 of federal relief funds to provide literacy and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) Learning Kits to children and youth in summer programs. The kits will be designed for PreK through Grade 5 students, and primary distribution hubs will be 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center summer sites run by school districts.

When the onset of the COVID-19 first caused most students to finish their 2020 school year at home, Vermont PBS quickly adapted to provide more educational content for children of all ages. Last year alone, 23,000 educators and families in Vermont accessed online and offline educational resources for students learning in classrooms and living rooms. The AOE supported these efforts by forming a cross-discipline team to develop supplemental resources for educators and families to complement the programming and align to Vermont's learning standards.

"Throughout the pandemic Vermont PBS has helped us reach Vermont students with engaging content and resources," said Secretary of Education Dan French. "I am grateful for their continued partnership as we support our students during these critical summer months and into next year."

"We know that programming through our partnership with AOE and VDL is a critical connection point and provides essential educational tools—particularly for children who are isolated due to COVID-19," said Eric Ford, Director of Programming for Vermont PBS. "Vermont PBS is proud of our nimble response last year, which filled a deep void when our schools closed suddenly last March. We hope that by continuing our partnerships with AOE and VDL, and by taking advantage of national PBS resources and sustaining support from our members, we can significantly contribute to the ongoing needs of Vermont students."

Even as students spend more time in traditional classrooms, Vermont PBS and the AOE continue their commitment to supporting Vermont educators and students year-round. The



programming helps to fill gaps in learning and prioritizes the social and emotional needs of our children.

“It’s not just about addressing gaps; it’s about expanding options and pathways for teaching and learning that are dynamic, can be personalized, and can bridge school and home contexts,” said Jess DeCarolis, Director of the AOE Student Pathways Division.

The partnership also supported educators with professional development webinars—which more than 1,000 Vermont educators attended in the past year—and PBS LearningMedia, a free, curated website for quality interactive media connections that engaged more than 6,000 Vermont teachers and families over the past year with its 500,000 educational assets. The AOE enhanced PBS resources with additional curricular connections and a screencast designed to help educators navigate the resources.

At the start of the pandemic, Vermont PBS shifted content on three channels—its main channel, Vermont PBS Kids, and the Vermont PBS Plus+ Channel—Monday through Friday to provide age-specific educational content. With the help of the AOE and the Department of Public Service, Vermont home access to those channels was significantly expanded. To learn more about what each channel offers and types of programs please visit [vermontpbs.org](http://vermontpbs.org).

Looking to the summer and fall, Vermont PBS hopes to continue broadcast curriculum support and springboard from distance learning to a more permanent Vermont PBS offering online and offline to provide for different learning styles. The AOE will continue to support the partnership and these efforts and ensure they connect to statewide education initiatives. Vermont PBS is looking also to establish partnerships with local organizations that can offer educational content and to work to develop new content that fills identified needs, such as social and emotional learning, STEM-based education, and learning content for grades 3-5.

### **About Vermont PBS**

Vermont PBS connects neighbors through stories that change lives. As Vermont’s only statewide independent TV station, Vermont PBS is a powerful catalyst that informs, educates and inspires. When you support Vermont PBS, you help all Vermonters learn, grow, and contribute to our great state and the world. Learn more at [vermontpbs.org](http://vermontpbs.org).

### **About Vermont Agency of Education**

The Agency of Education implements state and federal laws, policies, and regulations to ensure all Vermont learners have equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities. The Agency accomplishes this mission through the provision of its leadership, support, and oversight of Vermont’s public education system.

###