

UP for Learning

Summer 2016 Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning



The Promise of 'Our Time': Statewide Song Rings Out



Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning

Our Mission

Increase youth engagement by developing youth-adult partnerships in learning to ensure that each and every young person has the skills, self-confidence, and opportunities to assume meaningful roles in shaping their learning and their lives.

Our Vision

We envision a time when youth will take responsibility for their own learning by collaborating with adults to reach their own goals.

Who better to capture the heart and soul of school change in Vermont than young people? "Our Time," a song created and produced by students from around the state, claimed air time at eight schools this spring, as jazz bands, orchestras, choruses, and even a dance group, brought the new score to life. Stay tuned: it has only just begun to reverberate across our green hills and valleys!

This fall, the seven schools engaged in the Communicating School Redesign initiative (see page 6) noted a disturbing trend in the early implementation of Act 77: Flexible Pathways. This legislation is intended to create a notable shift in the way students learn, heightening relevance and students' roles as active learners and co-creators of their education. Brain research tells us that empowering learners in this way, moving to a more active and student-centered model, will engage a greater number of students, build critical life-long learning skills, increase post-secondary options, and nurture civic responsibility.

Why, then, were students around the state reported to be skeptical of this change? Why were they perceiving this opportunity as something that was being imposed on them—an unwanted adult agenda—rather than the means to elevate their role in learning? Perhaps it is because they are not accustomed

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Our Values & Guiding Principles

Share Responsibility. The process of change must be transparent and must be driven by adults and youth, in equal measure.

Start from Strength. Students, educators and parents possess the wisdom and capacity to orchestrate change. Beginning with what's working—as opposed to what's not—provides hope and energizes a community to embrace change.

Assume Positive Intentions. Educators truly want students to thrive. Young people are ready and able to commit to their learning and be involved in its design.

Seek Equity & Justice. The most effective learning environments are ones in which youth and adults are equally valued and heard. Those who have been most disenfranchised have the right to aspire to a more meaningful education.

Employ Data to Drive Change. Research is a powerful means to create a shared understanding and a vitally important way to build credibility between youth and adults. When a community works together to make meaning of their own data, they are strengthened by what they learn and emboldened to take action.

Create Open Dialogue. Deep conversation is central to changing school cultures. Young people are particularly able initiators of this dialogue, creating a shared vision for education and the learning process.

Farewell to Erin: An Appreciation

Erin Dezell has been the Associate Director of UP for Learning for three years. She recently announced that she will be leaving UP and accepting the position of Registrar and College Planning Coordinator in the Harwood Union guidance department starting mid-July.



When Erin came on board, I had been operating solo for five years. Erin transformed my life and has set UP for Learning on a remarkable path of growth and sustainability. Here are but a few of her accomplishments:

- Organizing an accounting and budgeting system
- Overseeing the Getting to Y: Youth Bring Meaning to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey program, supporting on average 18 schools per year, including a significant rewrite of the program guide in collaboration with the University of New Mexico
- Upgrading the YATST web site, and creating and managing the UP for Learning and Shaping Our Future Together web sites
- Overseeing the 502(c)(3) nonprofit status application, including drafting the organization's bylaws
- Drafting UP's first Personnel Policies manual
- Endless hours putting conference packets together, creating nametags, organizing the registration process, and welcoming folks with a smile

And I would be remiss if I left out the exquisite menus and gourmet food she personally prepared for countless leadership team meetings, CSR Advisory board sessions, and other gatherings, never leaving out a gluten-free or vegetarian option and always having plenty for seconds.

Erin has expedited UP for Learning's growth, clearly evident when you consider we were serving 28 schools in 2013 and have grown to 60 schools this past year. Thankfully, she is going to a longstanding YATST/UP for Learning school, to follow her dream of supporting students and contributing to school change through a guidance position. They are fortunate! We will miss her indomitable spirit, exuberant laugh, and heartfelt devotion to UP's mission. And of course, we wish her all the best.

With deep gratitude,



200+ Participate in Second 'Power Squared' Summit

Over 200 youth and adults engaged as educational change agents throughout Vermont gathered on April 27th at Lake Morey Inn and Resort for the second annual Power²: Youth and Adults Shaping Vermont Education Together summit.

"You felt the electricity in the air upon walking into the foyer!" said one participant. "Lake Morey Inn was humming with greetings, plans, and shared accomplishments in every corner on this crisp April day. Workshops led by youth-adult teams energized the morning with presentations and breakout sessions that covered the spectrum of efforts underway in schools across Vermont."

The guiding questions for the summit that helped to inform, inspire and move participants to authentic dialogue for action included:

- What does it look and sound like when young people partner with adults as they shape their educational experience?
- How can we learn from other schools engaged in similar work to elevate student voice?
- What are our next steps to address the youth-adult re-

lationship in our school, ensuring that both power and responsibility in learning and education are shared?

Students presented alongside adults in small "sharing sessions" throughout the morning, exploring twelve themes about education in Vermont with youth and adult partnership at the center of driving transformation. Check out the summit resources, including the agenda, workshop descriptions and more, at upforlearning.com/blog/113-power2-resources.

In a new activity this year, people were invited to sign up for podcast interviews. The result was a powerful mix of individual and small group interviews. They spoke of their most meaningful learning experiences in and out of the school setting and shared their wishes for learning, the opportunities they have had and those they see on the horizon for their upcoming peers. The podcasts are in production and will be released this fall.

The summit was hosted in partnership with the Bay and Paul Foundations, Shelburne Farms, Big Picture Learning, The School Project Foundation, Partnership for Change and UP for Learning.

Personalization and empowerment and voice mean little if we don't have any sense of why we are getting personal, what kinds of voices we need to hear, and what we want to be empowered for. We are hungry for seeing our work in schools in the context of broader moral/ethical/political imperatives. The typical college and career readiness imperatives are largely inadequate in this regard.

— Power² participant reflection

Funding UPdate: Generous Supporters for the Coming Year

UP for Learning remains ever grateful for the continued support of the **Bay and Paul Foundations**, who awarded both a \$125,000 grant to support our 2016-17 operating budget and an additional \$12,500 to underwrite expenses related to the July International Seminar: Amplifying Student Voice and Partnership. **The Wisdom Connection**, a foundation that has similarly helped support our growth since our inception in 2008, awarded a grant of \$12,000 to assist with development of the YATST program. Recently, we received word from the **J. Warren and Lois McClure Foundation** of their intention to support the Communicating School Redesign initiative with an award of \$30,000. Several days later, UP was notified of an additional \$8,000 grant extension from **Vermont Community Foundation** discretionary funds to help meet a remaining balance. This spring, the **Agency of Education** awarded a contract at \$28,000 to UP for Learning, for services related to integrating youth into the Education Quality Standards field-based assessment process. We also deeply appreciate the annual **Department of Health** subsidy of \$22,000 to support both Getting to 'Y' and the M3: Mindset, Metacognition and Motivation initiatives. Lastly, the **Robert Wood Johnson** grant has helped us significantly improve the M3 model, opening up new opportunities for next year.

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to being initiators of their learning or having a sense of control in shaping its direction. If so, perhaps what students need now is a message that comes not primarily from adults,

but from other youth:

actual Vermont students

encouraging others to explore the

potential of change efforts, using their own language and a compelling medium.

With this in view, UP for Learning rallied youth to tell the story of school change through music, introducing a student's-eye-view of student-centered learning.

This winter, twelve talented student musicians from eight Vermont schools signed on to the "Sound Check" initiative and gathered for a two-day retreat at Goddard College. The group members, anxious to get writing, were restless during initial activities to surface dreams and a vision of school change. Posters with provocative quotes, though, sparked rich discussions. Conversations identified the alignment of this vision with Vermont's movement toward personalized learning and proficiency-based graduation. After that, the lyrics and melody took shape over the course of two days, with intense work steeped in creativity.

A professional-quality sound track took form at the Guildford Sound studio a month later, thanks to the composition work of Cabot music students and a reconvening of the Goddard team at the studio. This sound track then came to life through song and dance this spring at eight Vermont schools. These performances were videotaped and the footage will be woven into a compelling collage, capturing the story of Vermont's school change hopes from a youth perspective.

The music video will serve as a catalyst for dialogue in communities around the state this fall. The lyric writing team was also interviewed to help make the link between the song lyrics and the Vermont change agenda. This complementary video is also in production. Both will be accompanied by a dialogue guide, with the goal of "going viral" in schools and communities in fall 2016.

The music video will be premiered at the International Seminar, "Amplifying Student Voice and Partnership," hosted at UVM in July, and will be distributed statewide as the school year is launched. Until then, let the chorus provide inspiration:

Any time, any place, any pace / learning who we are, no it's not a race.

It's our time, our place, our pace / choice and voice, we co-create.



Thanks to Brian Boyes

Brian Boyes, a music teacher and passionate educator at Cabot School, has taken the lead in this initiative. Four years ago Brian worked with the Cabot middle school to produce a nationally acclaimed music video, One Day: The Global Citizen Project. Brian was more than willing to bring his expertise to help further amplify student voices and roles in current school redesign.

Mindset, Metacognition and Motivation Initiative Expands

The more students know about how they learn and believe in their potential as learners, the more successful they will be! Focusing on these influential factors improves student engagement and helps them be ready to make the most of personalized learning plans and the shift to proficiency-based learning.

The M3: Mindset, Metacognition and Motivation initiative, now in its fourth year, invites youth and adults to partner as messengers, sharing the latest research and learning implications relating to:

- Mindsets: a critical examination of both youth and adults' ingrained beliefs about ability and the role of self-expectations and others' expectations on academic performance,
- Metacognition: learning about how we learn, and
- Motivation: key variables that impact the level of learning engagement.

UP for Learning has been tuning the M3 curriculum for four years, working to find the most effective means for students to play an integral role in introducing these concepts to their schools, with the help of adult partners. A number of Vermont schools participated in the fall M3 training. As a result, the Mt. Anthony team has redesigned their 9th-grade transition program and has embedded this training as an integral component. Peoples Academy led a student assembly and developed the theme this fall.

At Hazen Union, advisories were identified as an ideal time for students to reach peers with this information. A team of trained youth facilitators took the lead in piloting a series of six student-led weekly advisory sessions for the 9th-grade class. Their efforts began with facilitating an hour-long faculty meeting to introduce teachers to the core concepts of mindsets, provide an overview of their upcoming efforts, and seek their assistance to reinforce their messages. They also

I've always heard that you can think about "I can't do it yet, but I can eventually," but actually learning about the factual and the scientific part of it was pretty cool, learning that it really is something that you can do.

—student in an advisory who benefited from M3



M3 participants

I grew as a facilitator. I started to put myself in the mindset of facilitation instead of teaching. The more I taught these ideas, the more I saw them show up in my life.

—M3 participant

distributed weekly one-page flyers to faculty over the course of the six weeks, with an overview of their advisory objectives, several resources for teachers to pursue, and three or four specific ways they could build growth mindsets in their classrooms that week.

An advisory teacher who was interviewed reflected that “students learn better from other students because they are not an authority figure — they have more legitimacy and there is less natural resistance than coming from a teacher.” A student noted, “I see how hard it is when teachers get frustrated when students are talking in class; I feel bad for them.”

In the meantime, UP was working with the Two Rivers Supervisory Union, who envision a K-12 district level effort to embed M3 within their school cultures. This summer, faculty and students from schools across the district will join together for a two day kick-off of a year long M3 initiative. (Adults will receive graduate credit, while students receive dual enrollment credit.) The goal is to “establish a K-12 model for developing a schoolwide ‘language of learning’ and foster a vital and empowered learning community across the grades, in both school-day and out-of-school time contexts.”

Communicating School Redesign: Shaping Our Future Together Yields Diverse Strategies and Resources

How can we help people understand Vermont's ambitious school redesign agenda?

How can schools garner the full support of students, faculty, parents and the community in the change journey?

How can we engage all stakeholders in deep conversations that lead to a clear, rich and unified understanding of why schools are shifting learning and assessment practices?

Seven Vermont high schools (B.F.A. Fairfax, Chelsea, Hazen Union, Mount Anthony, Rochester, South Royalton and Whitcomb) joined the Communicating School Redesign: Shaping Our Future Together initiative this year. They focused on answering these core questions in order to design and implement their own research-based communications campaigns.

Their strategies were as varied as the schools themselves, and included:

- A youth-adult team visiting each Teacher Advisory groups (both middle and high school levels) to explain Act 77
- “I dream of a school where...” Instagram campaigns
- Student-led faculty and student forums to explore the relationship between brain research and Act 77 opportunities
- A student-facilitated day-long Student Congress with 100 students from 4 adjacent schools exploring Act 77
- A “Pave Your Own Path” poster and flyer campaign
- Informational videos explaining the legislation and showcasing the many pathways already available to students
- Student-facilitated faculty meeting and six youth-led advisory session focusing on teaching growth mindsets and metacognition—how the brain learns.

- Student membership on adult Teacher Learning Community groups to explore Act 77 and create a school-wide plan for implementation

Meanwhile, CSR faculty initiated the design of a two-page Act 77: Flexible Pathways flyer, a one-page Personalized Learning Plan handout for parent meetings, and a two-page infographic to walk through the basics of proficiency-based learning. The CSR class provided feedback on each evolving draft. These tools are all accessible on at shapingourfuture-together.org. Several other resources will be finalized for the start of the new school year (see list on next page).

The year culminated with all seven schools presenting their stories to the Vermont State Board of Education.

What is it like to do this work? “Each aspect of the course, whether youth-adult partnership, communications, or dialogue facilitation has

afforded me with unique and incredibly valuable experiences,” reflected an adult team member. “I am not the same educator that I was in September.”

A CSR student team member says, “On the faculty level, the more they see that their students are willing, curious, excited the more they react and jump on board with us. But none of this would have happened without one thing: communication.”

New CSR schools next year span the state, including Lyndon Institute, Hartford High School, Twin Valley High School, and Harwood Union. In addition to support from the Vermont School Boards Association and Bay and Paul Foundations, generous funding by the McClure Foundation will allow hiring a CSR Coordinator to increase support to schools and expand our statewide communications reach.



CSR members participate in a Wagon Wheel exercise.

New Resources to Build Support and Understanding of School Redesign

The seven Vermont schools who participated in the Communicating School Redesign: Shaping Our Future Together initiative this year have been hard at work developing tools and strategies for their own school-based campaigns, as well as statewide tools for use in all Vermont schools: Tools recently developed and available on the shapingourfuturetogether.org web site:

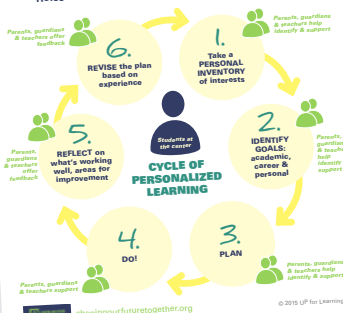
Personalized Learning Plans

The reason why PLPs matter:



PLP team approach

Roles for students, teachers and parents/guardians



- **Act 77: Flexible Pathways 2-page flyer**
- **Personalized learning plan development parent night one-page flyer**
- **Proficiency-based learning infographic**

By the start of the new academic year, the following additional resources will be available:

- **Proficiency-based learning explanation from a student perspective** with whiteboard animation
- **Act 77: Flexible Pathways explanation** with whiteboard animation format to accompany the flyer

- **Act 77: Flexible Pathways overview video**, featuring the stories of Vermont students opting for varied educational opportunities
- **“Our Time” student-generated state song music video**
- **“Our Time” student lyricists videotape** relating the lyrics to current Vermont change
- **Dialogue guide to accompany the “Our Time” premiere**

The web site includes many other excellent resources to help schools message change!

I love the fact that we can build off of each other, that our thought processes and personalities not only complement each other but also our work.

—youth participant reflecting on their CSR youth-adult partnership:

International Seminar: Amplifying Student Voice & Partnership

Vermont is hosting the first U.S.-based international seminar on “Amplifying Student Voice and Partnership,” on July 6–8 at the University of Vermont (UVM). It is co-hosted by UP for Learning, the Pennsylvania State College of Education, and UVM. The goal will be to identify means to elevate student voice and youth-adult partnership further in learning and school change internationally by exploring themes of implementation, evaluation, and sustainability; mobilizing collective resources; and increasing participants’ roles as advocates.

Researchers, leaders in teacher training programs, field-based organizations, and practitioners will explore core dilemmas and

research-based solutions to the challenges of elevating student voice. Participants are traveling to Vermont from six countries, 15 colleges and universities spanning ten states, eight community-based organizations serving youth in four different states, and high schools—including both youth and adult representatives—from three states. A number of Vermont Agency of Education policy leaders will also attend.

This group will be committed to strengthening the bridge between the research and practitioner realms, in order to advance the work they recognize as fundamental to the integrity of school redesign here and abroad.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION



Act 77: **Flexible Pathways**

GETTING TO 'Y' 2015-16

Getting to 'Y' is an opportunity for students to take the lead in bringing meaning to their own Youth Risk Behavior Survey data, and then take steps to strengthen their school and community based on their findings. This year 17 Vermont middle and high school teams participated in a Getting to 'Y' training day where they learned tools and strategies to organize their own retreat to analyze data, producing a "Student Executive Summary." This summary includes three strengths, three areas of concern, and a preliminary plan of action, based on an exploration of root causes. Teams also learned how to host a community dialogue event to share their executive summary with their community and lead meaningful multi-generational discussions. Teams then combined all that they have learned to frame action steps, which the group implements throughout the year. Below are some of the schools' findings, proposed action steps and accomplishments.



Students present at the Getting to 'Y' training day.

Mt. Anthony Middle School Bennington, VT



55% of students think they risk harming themselves if they have five or more drinks of alcohol once or twice each weekend

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Develop an awareness campaign to inform students and the community about areas of strengths and concerns identified in 2013 YRBS data analysis.
- Make posters to raise awareness about resources in our school and people to go to for assistance.
- Continue the GTY action cycle with the 2015 YRBS data when it is released

Otter Valley Middle School Brandon, VT

AREAS OF STRENGTH

99% of students attended physical education classes one or more days in an average school week

95% of students think it is wrong or very wrong for someone their age to smoke cigarettes

0% of smokers got their cigarettes from someone else, or gave someone money to purchase them cigarettes

AREAS OF CONCERN

20% of students have ever seriously considered suicide

8% of students have ever attempted suicide

AREAS OF STRENGTH:

0% of students smoked 11 or more cigarettes in the past 30 days

94% of students think it's wrong to smoke cigarettes

93% of students think their parents would think it's wrong for them to smoke marijuana

AREAS OF CONCERN:

46% of students got their cigarettes from someone else or gave them money to purchase them

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21% of students felt sad or hopeless every day for two weeks or more

47% of students were ever bullied at school

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Increased counseling services
- Supervised mediation to facilitate friendship, not bullying
- Develop a mentoring program

Edmunds Middle School & Hunt Middle School

Burlington, VT

In March, both Edmunds and Hunt middle schools held separate data analysis retreats looking at the statewide YRBS data for 2015. Each school identified statewide strengths and concerns. Both schools plan to hold a community dialogue event in the fall of 2016 using their supervisory union YRBS data when it is released.

Burlington High School

Burlington, VT

BHS has a dedicated student group, Students Taking Action and Risks Together (START), which has been working to improve the health of their community. START took the lead in analyzing the YRBS data and facilitating their community dialogue event.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Increasing Youth Assets

Marijuana Use

Prescription Drug Use

Sexual Health

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- START has been lobbying to pass legislation that would ban smoking and the use of tobacco products in Burlington parks and beaches. You can read more about their efforts at tinyurl.com/BHS-START-WCAX
- Increase locations where prescriptions drugs can be returned

- Put a condom bowl in the nurse's office at school
- Create a marketing/education campaign addressing the negative effects of smoking marijuana

Green Mountain Union School Chester, VT



AREAS OF STRENGTH

79% of students say that their parents talk to them about school

85% of students say they were not bullied in the last 30 days

50% of students who said they smoke, attempted to quit

AREAS OF CONCERN

18% have thought about suicide, **12%** have made a plan for suicide, and **6%** have attempted suicide

13% of middle school students have smoked cigarettes (more than a few puffs).

22% of middle schoolers in the state watch 3+ hours of TV a day and **37%** play video/computer games for more than 3 hours a day.

More than 54% of middle school students in VT have had sunburn in the last 12 months.

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PROPOSED ACTION STEPS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Increase access to counselors and supports for mental health issues
- Continue efforts around mindfulness and stress reduction
- Raise awareness of the risks of sun exposure and provide sunscreen for free at the school
- Give students a safe place to disclose their tobacco use and seek help to quit
- Address transportation issues that may be a barrier to students participating in extracurricular activities

Hazen Union High School Hardwick, VT

AREAS OF STRENGTH

- 44%** of smokers at Hazen tried to quit
- 73%** of students plan to complete a post high school program
- 98%** of students had one or more physical education classes in an average school week

AREAS OF CONCERN

- 22%** of students rode with a drinking driver
- 41%** of sexually active students did not use prescription birth control the last time they had sex
- 9%** of students had had sexual intercourse with four or more people

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Hazen GTY team hosted a performance by the Improbable Players (pictured at right), a drama troupe that features actors who are in long-term recovery and get audiences thinking and talking about alcohol and drug abuse. They coupled their community dialogue event with this unique performance.



Lowell Graded School Lowell, VT

AREAS OF STRENGTH

- 94%** of students think it's wrong or very wrong for someone their age to smoke cigarettes
- 97%** of students think it's wrong or very wrong for someone their age to smoke marijuana
- 87%** of students wore a seatbelt while riding in the car

AREAS OF CONCERN

- 16%** of students thought seriously about suicide
- 3%** of students had physical education classes daily in an average school week
- 64%** of students think they risk harming themselves by smoking 1 or more packs of cigarettes per day

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Lowell Graded School hosted a health choices fair in the spring. At the fair the students created different activities and resource stations addressing their identified concerns.

Montpelier High School Montpelier, VT

AREAS OF STRENGTH

- 2%** never or rarely wore a seatbelt while riding in a car
- 90%** report that they will probably or definitely complete a post high school program
- 91%** of sexually active respondents used either a condom or prescription birth control the last time they had sex

AREAS OF CONCERN

- 6%** of students reported having ever been forced to have sexual intercourse
- 9%** of students reported being physically hurt by someone they were dating or going out with
- 11%** of students reported making a suicide plan
- 27%** of students reported thinking people their age greatly risk harming themselves if they smoke marijuana regularly



Community dialogue event at Main Street Middle School.

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PROPOSED ACTION STEPS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- More resources for health education classes
- Campaign to destigmatize mental illness
- Normalize and encourage therapy

Main Street Middle School Montpelier, VT

AREAS OF STRENGTH

- 63%** of students participated in at least 60 minutes of physical education in the past 7 days
- 89%** of students talk to their parents at least weekly
- 0%** of students have smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days

AREAS OF CONCERN

- 19%** of students thought seriously about suicide
- 53%** of students think that they risk harming themselves if they have five or more drinks of alcohol once or twice a weekend
- 61%** of students think that they would risk harming themselves if they smoke marijuana regularly

24% of students played video games or used a computer for something that was not school related three or more hours a day

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Main Street Student Ambassadors conducted their data analysis in partnership with 32 parents and community members this spring. The group began a discussion on root causes for the identified concerns which will guide the Student Ambassadors' work during the next school year.

Randolph Union High School Randolph VT

As a part of their health class students from Randolph High School created public service announcements based on their strengths and concerns from the 2013 YRBS data. Through this project students were able to raise awareness about topics they cared about, engage in discussion, and learn a new technology. Two of the PSAs address opiate use in the community and 55% of high school students who do not feel valued in their community. These PSAs were shown to the Randolph Community Opiate Task Force this spring.

Connections in All Directions

To improve learning in Vermont, **the Bay and Paul Foundations** and **Shelburne Farms** launched the **Vermont Learning for the Future Project (VTLFF)**. Scott Spann of Innate Strategies began by interviewing 30 education leaders, including UP for Learning, mapping their unique perspectives and visions for the educational change needed in the state. Focus groups with youth, parents, and educators then contributed their wisdom on Vermont's learning system.

Over 125 invested stakeholders in educational change met over a series of retreats to analyze the map themes and chart a future direction. Five themes emerged. One that rose to the top was "Youth-Adult Partnership." Three UP for Learning faculty are now active on a VTLFF working committee focusing on this shared area of interest.

The Vermont Learning for the Future Project goal: By 2022, Vermont will have a model learning system where no less than 80% of youth are engaged in equitable, reciprocal learning relationships that help them become resilient global citizens committed to developing their individual capabilities and partnerships in order to create a socially and economically just and sustainable society.

Erin Dezell (UP Assistant Director), Dylan McAllister (Hazen Union senior), and Helen Beattie (UP Executive Director) attended the San Francisco-based **Learning and the Brain Conference**, "Shaping Student Mindsets: Promoting Academic Attitudes, Persistence and Performance" from February 11–13, 2016. This trip was made possible by the Robert Wood Johnson grant to support development of the M3: Mindset, Metacognition and Motivation initiative. They were able to learn from the country's leading experts in this field of study, including keynote speaker Carol Dweck (pictured at right, with Dylan).

UP for Learning partnered with **Vermont Afterschool** to co-plan and facilitate the **Vermont Expanded Learning Summit** on May 5 in Stowe, funded through an Agency of Education grant. Nearly a hundred participants from a variety of stakeholder groups joined to explore: How can schools, communities, and those who provide Vermont's children with personalized learning experiences build

bridges to support flexible pathways to graduation? Additional sponsors include the **VSAC GEAR UP program** and the **National Afterschool Association**.

UP for Learning and the **Center for Health and Learning (CHL)** are pleased to be working in collaboration to double the opportunities for Vermont students to be able and engaged citizens. For the past eight years, youth-adult teams from 31 high schools and 24 middle schools have participated in Getting to Y: Youth Bring Meaning to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, with support from the **Vermont Department of Health**.

CHL's Umatter Youth and Young Adults Mental Health Wellness Promotion and Community Action (Umatter YYA) is excited to kick off a second significant opportunity this coming winter for schools to engage young people in promoting wellness in their school communities. Students receive training to foster their own protective factors, develop critical life skills for resiliency, and conduct Community Action Projects. UP is working collaboratively with CHL, advertising both programs in one flyer and encouraging schools to participate in one or both opportunities, as best fits their needs. We will celebrate the accomplishments of both programs at an end-of-year conference where participants will share their work and learning.

Helen joined a **Project Harmony** gathering of top educational leaders from the nation of Georgia, to share the UP for Learning work and the concept of youth-adult partnership. As citizens of a fairly new democracy, the team is seeking ways to ensure that their educational system fosters civic responsibility. The Harwood observation day that followed allowed them to observe some of the UP programs and youth voice in action.

On June 2, the article "Vermont High School Takes Student Voice to Heart" was featured in **Education Week**:

www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/06/02/vt-high-school-takes-student-voice-to.html. It tells the story of Harwood's many progressive efforts to promote youth-adult partnership in learning and decision making, and repeatedly notes the influence and support of UP for Learning over the years. A major educational publishing house followed these links and subsequently contacted UP to initiate discussion about a possible book publication.

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A delegation of educational leaders from Tennessee came to Vermont to explore the movement toward student-centered practices, as part of a Gates-funded initiative. Helen attended a dinner with this team to share UP for Learning's model and focus on elevating student voice.



Helen Beattie Receives New England School Champion Award

Helen Beattie (above right), executive director and founder of UP for Learning, received a 2016 Champion Award from the New England Secondary School Consortium (NESSC) for her unique contributions to education redesign in Vermont. Her plaque reads: "2016 Vermont State Champion. A persuasive voice for enhancing learning through strong policy, best practice, and supportive public will." Helen was one of seven Champions recognized this year for their commitment to ensuring that public-school students across New England have a chance to succeed in school, live a fulfilled and meaningful life, and make a positive contribution to the world.

Helen notes, "UP for Learning has been recognized because of a team of remarkable faculty who have taken a framework and brought it to life, making it better with every iteration. This award speaks to the work of this dedicated, passionate, and talented group, and the schools we work with, who are committed to elevating students in learning and decision making. And this is all set within a state with an innovative education change agenda."

NESSC is a regional partnership working to advance forward-thinking innovations in secondary education to empower the next generation of citizens, workers, and leaders. Now in its seventh year, the conference attracted more than 900 educators, students, policy makers, and business leaders representing 17 states.



UPcoming Events

Communicating School Redesign (CSR)

CSR Kick-off:
September 29 & 30

CSR Studio Day:
October 20

CSR Facilitation Training: November 10

Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together (YATST)

YATST Orientation Overnight: September 9 & 10

Fall Advisor Dinner:
September 29

Learning Journeys

Learning Journey to Winooski HS:
November 9

Learning Journey to Randolph HS:
December 5

Learning Journey to Brattleboro HS:
January 4

Getting to 'Y'

GTY High School Training Day: October 4

GTY Middle School Training Day: October 13

GTY & Umatter End of Year Celebration: May 19

Mindset, Motivation & Metacognition

M3 in Advisory 2-day Training: October 26 & November 2

Participants at the YATST Design Day in March.



YATST School *UP*dates

Blue Mountain Union School: **Action Research Projects**

BMU's YATST class has been well established over the years and was led by two students this year. Students utilized the YATST curriculum and worked on group projects, building on research conducted by last year's YATST class. The team attended facilitation trainings and presented to the school, school board, and faculty sharing their two-week January term idea and then followed up with celebrations of what was learned and an assessment of the experience to guide future January terms.

Burlington High School: **School Innovation Seminar (SIS)**

This is the third year that SIS has run as a year-long elective, and the course continues to evolve. Our cycle is not an Action Research Cycle, but instead an Inquiry Cycle. In addition to three personalized/independent Inquiry/Action Projects, as a class, we also: collaborated with BHS' Advisory Coordinator to design the methods and analyze data related to student feedback, tuned (multiple iterations of) the school's Graduate Expectation Rubrics, visited Burr and Burton's Mountain Campus to collaborate and explore their unique learning environment, and facilitated five "Student Consultancies" with educator-partners. Next year's SIS

roster is bigger than past years. There is real potential for school-wide impact.

Craftsbury Academy: Student Senate

This year the Craftsbury Student Senate gathered information from students and staff through a Café Protocol and structured face-to-face conversation. The team developed key questions, designed the facilitated event, analyzed the results, shared findings, celebrated commendations and suggested recommendations in four areas impacting teaching and learning: Effective Use of Technology, Student-Teacher Relationships, Rewards & Punishments, and Student Life.

Fair Haven Union High School

As a first-year team, our experience this year was new but we quickly got the hang of teamwork and used the YATST curriculum to support our work. We were able to introduce YATST to the staff and students at Fair Haven. Since we wanted to learn more about the effectiveness of our teacher advisory system we generated a survey for both students and teachers to learn more before we engage in dialogue to inform our action. We got some great data, and will be taking that feedback into next school year to build on our action research cycle and work as a YATST team.

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YATST School Updates

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Green Mountain Union High School

Our team worked with teachers to partner in the first stages of the changes to proficiency-based learning in our district and we have been actively talking to board members about access and equity in the school. We've also led a team of middle school students through the YRBS Data. Students have gained valuable insights and facilitation skills. We hope to share those skills with students in our community next year and are looking forward to learning about mindset, motivation, and metacognition in partnership with other teachers in the district. This opportunity for our teachers is a great way to share the learning we've done the last few years and build capacity for youth and adult partnership.

Harwood Union High School

This year HUYATST reaped the rewards of numerous years of steady work. In the course of the year, the student-teacher feedback process was rolled out as a trial, shared with faculty and is now governed through school policy. In recognition of HUYATST commitment to youth-adult partnership, the feedback system provides teachers a continuum of collaborative options as to how to respond and share their results with students and colleagues while at the same time honoring student perspective on their classroom experience. We also continued our tradition of "All-School Dialogue" through wagon wheels and Socratic dialogue to elicit qualitative data on student experiences of the use of technology in learning and suggestions for potential use in the future.

Hazen Union High School

Hazen YATST had an expanded role this year, collaborating with Communicating School Redesign (CSR) efforts to provide resources to students and teachers to learn about promoting a growth mindset for students. See "Mindset, Metacognition and Motivation Initiative Expands," page 5.

Lamoille Union School

We started the first year of our YATST work at the overnight retreat in October. The work that we did there gave us our focus for the year and we left with our survey mostly completed. In November and December, we introduced our group to the school through the survey and through a "Too Many Sitting"-style activity. Our survey results were a cause for both celebration and concern: Many students feel empowered, but yet feel that their voices could be better heard. Teachers strive to make their classes engaging yet



students do not always feel engaged. We shared this information, along with the rest of the survey results, with all of the teachers and students at Lamoille. Teachers first completed a chalk-talk in a faculty meeting, and then the whole school completed a similar protocol on huge pieces of paper all around the school to better inform the data from the survey. As the year ends, we're synthesizing the student and teacher feedback and planning to present that information to the community before summer. Next year, we look forward to taking some action. So far, our ideas include student-teacher feedback system and a reserved space for students on school committees. We plan to continue the work that we've started! We've already started growing, and we were able to involve a lot of middle school students this year as well, so we think we'll have a stronger, more diverse team next year. Taking some tangible actions and making "real" change (that is, change that the students can see the impact of) will be a welcome step, as a lot of the students just want to go for it!

Otter Valley Union High School

OV's new advisory program this year resulted from YATST work over the past two years. The team created and implemented a survey to assess how the program worked and what adjustments needed to be made. We visited other schools around the state to learn about other schools' educational experiences of and opportunities for student voice in decision making. We also hosted YATST teams and shared our work. We are looking forward to next year when our YATST work will be integrated into a course offering about school and society.

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YATST School UPdates

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U-32 Middle High School

Our team had a very positive and busy year! Eight students and two advisors began the year by continuing their action research cycle by surveying students and faculty about their experiences of rigor, relationships, shared responsibility, and relevance in their learning. Our team analyzed the resulting data and identified the areas that warranted celebration, concern, or a closer look to guide our continued inquiry into how youth and adults might partner to continuously improve our school. YATST students also had the valuable opportunities to present their experiences of rigorous learning through grades K-12 at a January district-wide inservice day and design an engaging presentation of their survey findings for the April U-32 inservice day. Superintendent Bill Kimball recently joined our team at an UP for Learning Summit where we gained inspiration and learned the steps other schools have taken to further create dynamic learning experiences and a positive culture. Our work is ongoing - stay tuned for exciting action steps to arise in coming years as a results of this powerful partnership between youth and adults in Washington Central.

Twinfield Union High School

Our team accomplished a lot this year, from growing as a team, to sharing with our school the lens of the 4 Rs, to facilitating dialogue around our data. It also helped us to realize our accomplishments as a YATST school when we compared this year's data to data collected a few years ago and

saw how teachers' and students' perspectives have changed for the better. We are creating resources and activities for our new advisories to address how students and teachers feel about having a sense of belonging. It was great to learn ideas at YATST trainings and from visiting other schools.

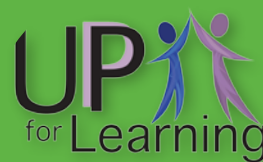
Williamstown High School

Our Action Plan this year was to create a feedback form system for students to give feedback to their teacher in regards to rigor, relevance, relationship, and responsibility around content and classroom management. The YATST students presented to the student body about the importance of their voice in assisting teachers with their classes for authentic assessment and feedback to create positive changes/tweaks in their work. The mission and vision is to simply create more dialogue and communication between the students and the teachers around content and classroom management. The feedback forms were given to each class at the end of the semester and next year our hope is to do it quarterly. Eventually, it would be great for teachers to do it at the end of each unit. We also had our YATST coach come and speak to our faculty on how to receive the information and how to present it to the students after they received the information so students could engage in deeper dialogue about the feedback and root causes and considerations of what is and is not possible for changes in classroom practice. We really want to fine tune the feedback form system so it becomes a culture in our school. That is our number one goal. We also want to continue to take some 9th and 10th graders to UP conferences and we would love to present again.

UP for Learning offers strategies, tools and expert coaching

for building a school community in which learning is engaging for everyone and youth are fully empowered. Vital youth-adult partnerships lie at the heart of this vision. YATST remains UP for Learning's signature training program and the fullest expression of our core values and principles.

For more information about UP for Learning, go to upforlearning.com or contact Executive Director Helen Beattie at helen@upforlearning.com.



Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning



The **UP for Learning** newsletter provides a brief snapshot of our work. It documents our efforts, strengthens communication between retreats, sparks reflection and celebration and inspires others. Partnership — we can learn a great deal from each other!

NEWSLETTER DESIGN BY DANA DWINELL-YARDLEY