

UP for Learning

Winter 2017

Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning



YATST Teams Take Action on Student-Teacher Feedback



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.

“Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.”

—Paulo Freire

When Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together (YATST) surveys at Harwood Union and Williamstown High Schools revealed students and teachers had diverging perspectives on key issues, teams at both schools drew the same conclusion: strengthening the student-adult feedback loop was crucial.

Helen Beattie, UP for Learning’s Executive Director, says these discrepancies fit a trend she’s observed in the nine years she’s been supporting student-faculty teams to conduct research about student engagement: “Teachers believe they are providing ongoing feedback to students about learning and adjusting instruction, and students do not report the same perceptions. There is a ‘puzzling gap’ between student and teacher viewpoints of this critical aspect of the classroom experience.”

Student-Teacher Feedback, continued on page 4 ►

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.



Getting to 'Y' Collaborates with Umatter: Expanding Opportunities for Students as Change Agents

Getting to 'Y' (GTY) has become a veteran program, with a well-established model that continues to expand its reach. Now in its ninth year, this initiative gives students a chance to analyze Youth Risk Behavior Surveys from their schools. GTY teams identify three concerns and three strengths within the data as focal points. After presenting this information to a diverse group of community members, the team creates a plan of action to address a major concern.

For example, at Essex High School, the team wants to enhance the health curriculum to include the identified concerns and the real-life consequences of making decisions that impact health and wellness. They also plan on creating five-minute films to show during morning advisories for the entire student body.

GTY continues to generate both interest from new school sites and ongoing participation from returning schools, which apply the program steps in fresh ways and develop alternatives based on the original model. The initiative has served 65 schools to date, with 18 sites (11 high schools and 7 middle schools) active in the current year. It has won strong support from the Vermont Department of Health, which has recognized its value in engaging young people as agents for positive change, not simply as survey "subjects."

In a new development this year, GTY has been collaborating with a program called Umatter YYA: Youth and Young Adults Mental Health Wellness Promotion and Community Action, and effort of The Center for Health and Learning in Brattleboro, VT. This partnership of two complementary initiatives has doubled opportunities for Vermont youth to improve the health and well-being of their schools. The programs can also be aligned to deepen efforts at a single site. At People's Academy, where the middle school team is involved in both GTY and Umatter, the trainings have been integrated to promote wellness through healthy coping strategies, as well as the ability to recognize when a peer needs help and how to provide it.

On May 23, Getting to 'Y' will celebrate all the work done by the participating schools this year, highlighting the team's yearlong efforts to promote health and wellness within their communities.



Participants at Kathleen Kryza's Think Smart seminar.

Reflections on M3: Mindset, Metacognition & Motivation

“I believe that if just one teacher is trying to do something a different way I will never actually become accustomed to this new way,” wrote Alexi White, a Green Mountain High School student. “I think that I need to be exposed to something in more than one setting.”

Heather Miele, a Black River High School science teacher, responded: “Learning how to learn and about learning should be introduced as early as possible in an attempt to develop good learning habits as a student progresses through their education. If they can fluidly move between different practices, then by the time they are preparing for high-stakes learning situations they will already have the tools needed to learn the material and it becomes a matter of application.”

This is one of many written exchanges in the Two Rivers Supervisory Union Mindset, Metacognition and Motivation seminar assignments, reading and analyzing the book *Make it Stick* (Brown & Roetinger) as a multi-generational learning community. Participants include teachers and students from two high schools and two elementary schools in the district, who have committed a year to developing the M3 theme throughout their schools. Very soon the three Green Mountain students will be implementing the elementary school curriculum they have been working on this fall, testing it out in both an after-school program group and an elementary school-day setting. Teacher participants have each been adapting what they have been learning to their own classroom practices.

In the meanwhile, the M3 Teacher Advisory initiative has focused on training youth teams from both BFA Fairfax and North Country High School to roll out ten peer-to-peer advisory sessions that cover the gamut from growth mind-

sets and effective learning (metacognitive) strategies, to the role of stress in their lives. These teams have also facilitated an introductory hour-long faculty meeting to share their intentions and seek the support of teachers to align their practices with brain-based research.

Kathleen Kryza, a national expert on weaving brain-based teaching strategies into classroom practices, presented a day-long seminar on February 3, with 80 K-12 teachers from around the state in attendance. UP for Learning, with the support of the Vermont Department of Health, sponsored this day to elevate the importance of shaping classroom practices based on current brain research. This is particularly important at this time, to prepare all Vermont's youth to fully optimize personalized learning opportunities which will require a greater capacity for independent learning. In the words of one participant, “I really enjoyed the conference because there were educators from elementary school to high school and there were strategies that would work at any of these levels.”

Kathleen Kryza offered the following reflection, “When students become the active drivers of learning, taking the lead in teaching their peers about mindsets and metacognition, everyone benefits. The Up for Learning program is an exciting construct for making real change happen in our schools — student ownership of the learning is the key. “There is, in fact, no teaching without learning.” (Freire, 1998)

A video was released this fall that tells the story of the M3 Hazen pilot, providing insights into what it is like for students to take a significant role in both shaping and piloting the advisory curriculum during the spring of 2016 ([youtube.com/watch?v=4yePbF-8qcI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yePbF-8qcI)).

Funding UPdate: Generous Supporters

THE
BAY & PAUL
FOUNDATIONS

UP for Learning is once again grateful for the significant support of the **Bay and**

Paul Foundations, who have renewed their annual support of UP's operating budget for the 2017-18 school year and support the International Seminar.

GRIPTAPE

We have also received a \$5,000 grant from the **GripTape Initiative** (America Achieves organization) to help construct a means to nurture (and measure) participants' belief in their ability to shape their lives and contribute to the lives of others (sense of agency).



The **Vermont Department of Health** has provided funding to help support Getting to Y, M3: Mindset, Metacognition and Motivation, and the "Think Smart" conference.

YATST is meaningful to me because: It will help me have more voice. It will make me a more confident leader. It will guide me to making our school a better place.

—youth participant

◀ *Student-Teacher Feedback, continued from page 1*

To close this gap, Harwood and Williamstown YATST teams have been working on tools for students to give constructive mid-semester feedback to their teachers. In order to maximize input and buy-in from their student and faculty peers, teams at both schools conducted more surveys, and presented data and design proposals for further input, before piloting the new feedback systems. Mary Schell Whalen, Director of UP for Learning and YATST mentor, led a faculty meeting at Williamstown last year connecting John Hattie's research with the school's effort to increase student achievement through the student-teacher feedback system. At Harwood, "students have taken the lead in rolling this out to the faculty," according to language teacher and YATST co-advisor Marcus Grace.

When Williamstown piloted its new mid-semester student-teacher feedback system last year, the response was largely positive. Kate Mascetti, a junior who chairs the school's YATST group, thinks most students "took the feedback forms seriously because this was their opportunity to get their voice out there." She also cites faculty support as key to the success of the pilot. Even before the rollout, when Kate and other YATSTers presented a draft of the feedback form at a faculty meeting, teachers were "really on board. They backed us up." Colleen Sheridan, a junior and veteran YATST member, reports that teachers are incorporating the feedback but acknowledges that there may be "limits to how far they can adjust their classes." As faculty co-advisor Brooke Nadzam reminds them, though, it's only the first year. "The more feedback cycles the school goes through, the more it will become more a part of the culture, and the more the dialogue will effect change."

Harwood's four-year experience with student-teacher feedback systems suggests Brooke is right. After two pilot years when administering the surveys was voluntary, the YATST-designed mid-semester feedback process was adopted as official school policy last year. YATST co-advisor Ellen Berrings says that although most teachers opted into the process, "student government felt it should be more than voluntary, so they took up the cause as the governing body for students and took it through the process of becoming law at our school." All teachers are now expected to administer the surveys, reflect on the data, and take action based on the feedback. The survey also includes a student self-assessment section, which reinforces the sense of partnership among students and teachers in improving learning.

One thing is clear from the work of these two YATST teams: strong youth-adult partnerships in school are built on a foundation of healthy dialogue and robust data.

The remarkable feature of the evidence is that the biggest effects on learning occur when teachers become learns of their own teaching and when students become their own teachers.

—Hattie, 2009



Asia Bernatchy testifies before the House Education Committee.

‘Our Time’ at the State House: Honors for Students’ Song

On February 15, the Vermont House of Representatives voted on a resolution honoring the student-adult team that produced “Our Time”: an original song and music video created to spark deeper, more critical discussion about the future of educational change in Vermont. The project’s goal was to engage students in articulating their vision for their education in response to Act 77, the 2013 legislation that allows students to work toward graduation through “flexible pathways.” The resolution, HCR 42, was introduced by Chip Troiano (Caledonia-2) and passed by a unanimous vote.

The song emerged from a collaboration among twelve students representing eight Vermont high schools, Cabot School music teacher Brian Boyes and Plainfield singer-songwriter Kris Gruen. It was produced with support from UP for Learning as part of UP’s ongoing Communicating School Redesign campaign. The team composed lyrics and melody during an intensive two-day session at Goddard College, prompted by the question “What is your vision of learning at its best?” Next, they traveled to Guilford Sound Studio to mix the final track. The group then recorded student singers and musicians at schools around the state, and shot footage for the music video, which featured the talents of more than 150 Vermont students. A companion documentary, “Talking Our Time,” which discusses the alignment between the project and the Vermont educational agenda, were produced with the help of Ned Castle from the Vermont Folklife Center.

Taken together, the two videos make a powerful statement, speaking eloquently to the core issues embodied in the Act 77 initiative: ownership, relevance, and student-centered

learning. A Dialogue Guide insures the use of these videos as a statewide catalyst for dialogue.

Earlier in the day, a group of students presented the “Our Time” project and testified before the House Education Committee. Grace Ecklund-Gustavson, a junior at U-32, highlighted the importance of relevance and ownership in learning. “We spend a lot of time writing equations and 1,000-word essays without caring about the subject at all. I believe that by making education more personalized and more intimate, Act 77 makes learning more meaningful than before.”

Dorothy Whalen, a Lyndon Institute junior, affirmed this, describing her struggles in school when learning didn’t feel relevant. “I went through four high schools,” she said. “I was looking for meaning in my education, and by doing ‘Our Time,’ I wanted to show what my education meant to me.”

UP for Learning’s Executive Director, Helen Beattie, told the Education Committee that students were their best allies in making the vision of Act 77 a reality. “They unlock our hearts and do an end-run around our resistance to change, because their words are just so powerful. It is through dialogue that this change will become persistent and deep.”

The message appeared to resonate with many of the legislators. Rep. Kate Webb of Shelburne thanked the students for their testimony, saying, “As we work so hard to bring STEM [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] into our schools, this is just a reminder to put the A for ‘arts’ back in this equation.” Dabbing away tears, she gestured to the students. “You and you and you are the reason I sit in this seat.”



CSR participants work on a matching game at the kick-off day.

Communicating School Redesign Participants Collect Data, Implement Campaigns for Better Educational Future

The six Communicating School Redesign schools this year stretch between the Canadian and Massachusetts borders. All are engaged in implementing their own research-based campaigns to build public understanding and support of school redesign in Vermont. Their mental models research shapes their efforts, which include community nights to discuss and celebrate learning, a week-long celebration of learning opportunities, full school dialogues, Snapchat and Instagram campaigns, videotapes capturing flexible pathways options, and student-led advisory sessions sharing information about Act 77 and proficiency-based learning.

The combined data of students' and teachers' beliefs about education and learning is also informing state-level efforts. That data was recently shared at a meeting of Vermont's curriculum coordinators, to raise awareness of the readiness for change. The student data findings have also been published on the Students at the Center blog of the Nellie Mae Foundation, raising awareness regionally of the need to mobilize and partner with students as change agents in the school redesign process. (studentsatthecenterhub.org/making-students-partners-rather-than-pawns-in-the-change-process)

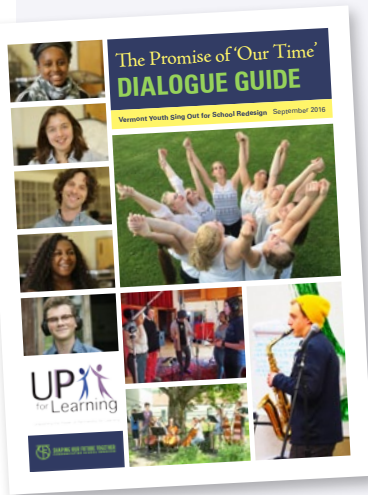
UP for Learning continues to develop messaging materials to help all schools in Vermont effectively communicate

school change. The "What's the Deal with Proficiency Based Learning" white board animation was released this fall (youtu.be/5UKrio4xKHc). A shorter animation highlights the benefits of personalized learning and flexible pathways (youtu.be/a-3aWF82_oo). And the new "Flexible Pathways to Graduation: Six Vermont High School Students" shares the stories of six students who have chosen differing educational options in the course of their high school experience (vimeo.com/197344463).

The CSR experience can have a significant impact on team members. In the words of one current high school student participant, "Since day one, I have developed a deep passion for the work I am doing. I have witnessed, first hand, struggling students slip through the cracks of traditional education. This is especially saddening to me. Education is the foundation for our lives. Without a well-rounded education, one struggles immensely to communicate, solve, and even function. It is so rewarding to me that the changes I am making today will affect future generations. I believe that is what excites me the most about the work I am doing. I will see the changes I brought to my community for the rest of my life. This affects more than just me, it will affect my children, and my grandchildren. I am creating a better future for my community."

New Resources: ‘Our Time,’ Student-Teacher Feedback, Flexible Pathways

The UP for Learning website, upforlearning.com, has added many new and useful resources to support schools in their efforts to address school redesign.



The “Our Time” music video is featured and includes **The Promise of ‘Our Time’ Dialogue Guide** and **‘Our Time’ for All: A Call to Action for Equity**. Resources include videos and a news feature from WCAX describing this collaboration with youth and adults from conception to implementation.

The YATST website is now available directly through the UP website under the “Initiatives” tab. Check out the new **Student-Teacher Feedback Guide** highlighting the pioneering work of Williamstown High School and Harwood Union High YATST teams to create

responsive systems of teaching and learning.

Has it been difficult to build understanding and support for personalized learning and flexible pathways? This newly released video may help! **Flexible Pathways to Graduation: Six Vermont High School Students** provides an engaging overview of students’ experiences in varied learning options and provides visual testimony to the potential of students actively shaping their route to graduation. It was produced in partnership with the Vermont Folklife Center and funded by the Bay and Paul Foundations. vimeo.com/197344463



Our resources are all open source at upforlearning.com. Do contact us by email (helen@upforlearning.com) and friend us on Facebook, UP for Learning. Don’t forget to include us in your tweets, @yatstvt and @UPforVt! Let us know how you are using any of our materials and what needs you might have in terms of your own school redesign. Please share widely!

Having youth serve as facilitators of the curriculum proved to be a powerful aspect of the program.

—M3 evaluation

Web Traffic Up for Communicating School Redesign and UP for Learning

The Vermont Communicating School Redesign (CSR) toolkit was created three years ago as a joint endeavor of our CSR work and the Students at the Center (Nellie Mae Foundation) website. Our Vermont model was replicated on this regional website, excluding some pieces that referenced Vermont-specific work (found on UP’s CSR: Shaping Our Future Together website).

We recently received notice that the toolkit was one of the Students

at the Center top “hits” for 2016, receiving 13,275 page views in the last year!

At our own UP for Learning website, visits are up 39% in the first six months of the year as compared to the same time period

last year, with over 5,620 sessions to date.

Connections in All Directions

Third Power² Summit: Youth & Adults Shaping Vermont Education Together

Are you engaged in work with high school youth that is changing education in Vermont? Do you want to learn why and how youth and adults across the state are partnering to create change in our schools? If so, join us for the Third Annual Power² Summit: Youth & Adults Shaping Vermont Education Together. This will be a highly interactive day designed to promote dialogue, choice, creativity, and networking.

This summit is for high school students, educators, administrators, school board members, and thought leaders partnering in school change efforts. Youth and adults are encouraged to attend in teams for the day, but individuals are certainly welcome!

The details: May 2, 2017, 9 am–3 pm, at the Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, VT.

Space is limited; registration will be on a first come, first served basis. Maximum team size is 8. Cost is \$25 per adult and \$15 per student. YATST discounts are available. More details and registration at: tinyurl.com/Power2-2017

Vermont youth and UP for Learning participated in the **Every Student Succeeds Act Public Input Retreat** in August.

Mary shared the power of “Our Time” in a presentation called “The Changing Landscape of Education for Vermont Educators” with Marti Kingsley, Vermont Student Assistance Corporation Outreach Counselor, at the 2016 **Vermont Educational Opportunities Conference** in October held at Vermont Technical College.

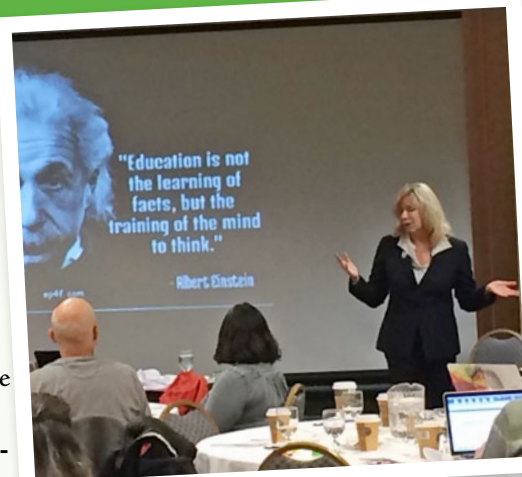
UP for Learning, with the Bay and Paul Foundations, attended the **2016 Vermont Collective Impact Conference** in October held in Stowe.

The “Our Time” lyric writers and UP faculty facilitated the student workshop, “The Promise of Equity in Our Time,” at the **Rowland Foundation Annual Conference** in October.

Asia (Twinfield Union), **Rory** (Lyndon Institute) and Helen presented a workshop called “Our Time: Students Sing for Change” at the **League of Innovative Schools conference** this fall in Norwood, MA.

UP for Learning continues its involvement in **Vermont Learning for the Future** efforts to elevate youth-adult partnership in Vermont.

UP has been invited to a **Learning Accelerator** think tank group comprised of youth and adults from around the country who are committed to elevating the role of young people in their learning. This effort is hosted by the GripTape Organization, which is part of America Achieves. **Clara Lew-Smith** (Hazen Union) and Helen attended the first meeting this fall in NYC, and are scheduled to attend two more throughout the year.



UP hosted **Kathleen Kryza** (above), a national expert in building positive school cultures that embrace growth mindsets and metacognitive strategies, at the “**Think Smart Seminar**” on February 3 at Lake Morey. This was funded by the Vermont Department of Health.

Mary attended the **North Dakota Study Group Retreat** in Garrison, NY, in February with members of Twinfield Union School.

UP for Learning was invited to join the **Transformational Learning Collaborative** (TLC). This work is spearheaded by the Q.E.D. Foundation, in partnership with the School Reform Initiative; the Yellin Center for Mind, Brain, and Education; the School Project Foundation; and the Eagle Rock Professional Development Center.

In April, Serena and Mary will conduct a Getting to ‘Y’ workshop at the **Vermont Middle Level Educators** spring conference. GTY middle school alumnae, **Eleanor** and **Nadia** from **Montpelier High School**, will co-facilitate the workshop, leading the group in the YRBS matching game and sharing reflections on their own GTY experience.

Education Quality Reviews: Youth Continue as Pilot Partners in AOE Process

UP for Learning has continued to work with the Vermont Agency of Education on the new accountability system called Education Quality Reviews (EQR). The review process aims to help schools “deliver on the promise” of statewide quality standards, gathering evidence through site visits by teams of educators, AOE staff, and students. The Agency has made an important commitment to youth participation.

“By involving students in the reviews of their own school systems,” says Deputy Secretary of Education Amy Fowler, “we help keep student voice at the center of the conversation about what students need from their schools.”

This year has seen a second round of pilot site visits, called Integrated Field Review or IFR, to test a variety of training and visit formats. Based on this experience, the Agency expects to roll out its plan for bringing EQR to all supervisory unions in a three-year cycle starting next year.

To support student success in the visit process, the AOE has engaged UP for Learning to provide specialized training for youth participants. UP faculty Bruce Perlow and Martha Rich have adapted this training to the Agency’s pilot design as it develops, focusing on key concepts in EQR along with support for authentic youth-adult teamwork.

Student participants find the technical language of school reform challenging, but value the chance to contribute to meaningful change in their schools. They recommend a format that provides students opportunities to learn about EQR before they join in training with the full youth-adult teams; ideally, they’d like both advance orientation and embedded student training.

In every format tested, though, they’ve demonstrated that students have unique wisdom and insights to bring to the process of school evaluation. As student put it: “Only students can speak up for their peers and express how their school can help them succeed.”

Only students can speak up for their peers and express how their school can help them succeed.

—EQR student participant



UPcoming Events

**3rd Annual Power²
Vermont Summit:**
May 2

**2nd International
Seminar: Amplifying
Student Voice &
Partnership: July 5–7**

**Mindset, Motivation &
Metacognition (M3)**

**M3: Two Rivers
Supervisory Union
Class Day: March 24**

Getting to ‘Y’

**GTY Vermont
Association of Middle
Level Education
Conference: March 15**

**Umatter End of Year
Celebration: May 19**

**GTY End of Year
Celebration: May 23**

**Youth and Adults
Transforming Schools
Together (YATST)**

YATST YAC Overnight:
March 29

YATST Design Day:
March 30

Spring Advisor Dinner:
May 11

**Communicating
School Redesign
(CSR)**

CSR Design Day: May 5

Learning Journeys
Register at tinyurl.com/hhseul8

**Learning Journey to
Pittsfield Middle/High
School: April 12**

**Learning Journey
to Champlain Valley
Union High School:
May 9**



YATST School *UP*dates

Blue Mountain Union High School

We have been focused on building relationships within our school community from school spirit to freshman class unity. We also are working on the continual improvement of our January term where students and teachers get to choose interest areas to explore instead of our regular class schedule. YATST created J-Term last year and now we want to continually get feedback and make it as good as it can be. Our survey and data retreat will be happening this spring- so we are excited to see where that will lead us next.

Burlington High School

The School Innovation Seminar class is where YATST lives. The class is identifying learning styles and assessment. Discussion throughout the year has included how brain research influences learning as well as mindset and expectations. We have also been involved in inquiry projects generated by students' own relevant questions.

Fair Haven Union High School

The Fair Haven YATST group served hot chocolate to students and staff before the Holiday Break to get the word out about YATST and what we do. We are currently working on revising the survey that we can give to students and staff to help facilitate change in our building.

Harwood Union High School

Our "All School Dialogue" (ASD) focused on student voice this year and included 31 student members from the leadership team, Socratic dialogue group, student council and YATST. Our total number of participants including students and teachers was approximately 650. Our first ASD focused on student-teacher relationships and resulted in a student-teacher feedback system. Our second ASD focus was the appropriate use of technology by both students and teachers in teaching and learning. The results of that dialogue were shared with the school action team addressing technology.

Hazen Union High School

The Hazen YATST team has reviewed survey questions which will be given to students and teachers. We have been involved with supporting the Mindset, Metacognition and Motivation initiative, including presenting the M3 Vermont student advisory model at the Think Smart! Conference and at the upcoming New England Secondary Schools Consortium Regional conference.

Lamoille Union High School

The Lamoille YATST crew has spent the fall attending

continued on page 11 ►

YATST School Updates

◀ continued from page 10

trainings, getting the word out about our mission, and planning to take action following our school-wide survey last year. Students and adults from our school have participated in the YATST orientation and facilitation training, attended events such as the Rowland Conference, and visited Winooski, Randolph and Harwood Union high schools. We have also continued to share our work with the wider school community by presenting to the faculty and school board. The school board was particularly impressed by students' commitment to the work, and is in the process of approving a YATST course to be offered next fall.

As we learn and share, we also gird ourselves for the challenging work of applying our knowledge. After openly deliberating about potential directions, we are now preparing to advocate for common student-teacher feedback forms in every class, as well as a potential change to the schedule, in order to make more time in the school week for interest-driven learning opportunities. We hope to make progress on both of these actions throughout the spring.

North Country Career Center

We gave our YATST survey and held a data analysis retreat over two days with students from the North Country Career Center programs. We engaged in wonderful dialogue regarding student voice and choice. It was a powerful experience to observe students from diverse Career Center programs working together and everyone involved agreed it was a positive experience. As a bonus, it was also lots of fun and we all had an amazing lunch provided by our culinary staff.

Otter Valley Union High School

The OV YATST class, now known as Schools and Society, had a very productive semester. We administered our second school culture survey and compared our results to the survey done in 2014 which provided insight into how our school

culture has grown and changed. Our group presented the findings to our faculty. And as a result, it is clear that both students and faculty support a feedback system that will improve our learning environment. We have begun to develop this system. We also participated in the Winooski High School Learning Journey. This was a great experience for our students, who experienced a very different school environment from their own and the growing diversity of our state.

Randolph Union High School

As new YATST team, we have been inspired by the number of students who are desiring involvement in YATST and we are eager to start some focused work having identified our data priorities. At our data retreat with our 16 YATST team members and three advisors we arrived at a consensus concerning our data priorities addressing how students learn best and are assessed.

Twinfield Union School

Twinfield visited the Harwood All School Dialogue and we seek ways to increase student engagement, address equity and learn more about restorative circles.

Williamstown High School

We have given our annual survey. We are now in the process of analyzing our data and identifying next steps for our group. The work of YATST is integrated into other aspects of the leadership team and will be part of our leadership team retreat.

Windsor YATST Team

The Windsor YATST Team sponsored a hot cocoa bar for students in December to invite students and teachers to learn more about YATST. We presented survey data to our school board and taking next steps to share the data with students and move to action.

continued on page 12 ►

I have become more aware of my surroundings this year by going to these different conferences and meeting or talking to new people. I haven't just learned about all things relating to YATST. I've learned that I can work on my own and be OK. I've learned that my opinion is important, no matter what the topic may be. I've learned to speak up in crowds of people I don't know. I've found my voice.

—YATST youth participant

YATST School Updates

◀ continued from page 11

'Personal Power with Purpose' at the Center of YATST Youth Advisory Council

The YATST Youth Advisory Council (YATST-YAC), launched in January 2017, is an opportunity for youth leaders to develop their own power and empower others to effect change. YATST-YAC also advises UP for Learning and co-creates YATST programming. YATST-YAC members are in a position to activate youth-adult partnership and learner agency statewide. The council is comprised of high school youth who represent YATST teams engaged in participatory action research and school redesign across Vermont.

Members of YATST-YAC demonstrate their leadership in service to their schools and UP for Learning's mission by playing an active role in efforts to make the structures of schools responsive to those who are most directly impacted by school policy and practice. YATST-YAC members have curiosity, experience, and a desire to collaborate. Their efforts are fueled by "personal power with purpose," building leadership by working for the collective good and moving civic engagement from an abstract concept to an authentic, lived experience.



Vision without action is only dreaming, action without vision is only passing time, but vision with action can change the world.

— Nelson Mandela

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.

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!

