

UP for Learning

Winter 2016 Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning



M3: Mindset, Metacognition and Motivation



Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning

Our Mission

Increase student engagement by developing youth-adult partnerships in learning to ensure that each and every student 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 students will take responsibility for their own learning by collaborating with adults to reach their own goals.

"Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire."

—William Butler Yeats

And what kindles this fire? Our belief in our ability to learn, knowledge about how we learn, and understanding the keys to our engagement. The Mindset, Metacognition, and Motivation (M3) initiative fuels students' ability to be lifelong learners. This is why it is at the forefront of UP's initiatives this year.

What is M3: Mindset, Metacognition (learning about learning) and Motivation?

M3 is a resurgence of a curriculum developed four years ago titled "Great Expectations...or Not." It was piloted in 11 schools during the 2012 and 2013 academic years, revamped based on feedback, and renamed to better reflect the core components of the effort.

Last spring, Dylan McAllister, a Hazen junior and long-term participant in M3's development, chose to make this work the focus of his senior year "capstone" project. Dylan and Helen (Executive Director of UP) co-wrote

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.



Members of the Hazen GTY team.

Getting to 'Y' Celebrates Eight Years, Offers Two Training Days

The Getting to 'Y' Initiative (GTY) is celebrating its eighth year! It's now a mature program that continues to attract fresh interest: eighteen Vermont middle and high schools have chosen to take part in the initiative this year. Getting to 'Y' gives youth-adult school teams tools and strategies to take a significant role in analyzing their own Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data, share their findings with their communities, and move to action to improve the health of their school community.

To meet the needs of the growing GTY schools, two training days were offered this fall. One training day was developed for high school GTY teams and the other for middle school GTY teams. Eight high schools and nine middle schools attended the training days. A special training day was conducted to serve the Mt. Anthony middle school team of ten students and three adults. At each training the school teams were presented with a copy of the newly updated and redesigned Getting to 'Y' manual completed in the late summer of 2015. The new manual outlines the GTY initiative and provides all activities and templates needed to move through the action research cycle, all in an easy-to-read layout.

This spring Getting to 'Y' will be piloted as a unit in two Randolph Middle School health classes. UP for Learning faculty, along with health educator Deb Lary, will be working to align the Getting to 'Y' initiative with proficiencies and transferable skills to embed it into the health curriculum. Holding true to the principle of youth-adult partnership, the team is exploring co-facilitation of the class by a high school student.

Over the course of eight years, 67 Vermont middle and high schools have participated in Getting to 'Y'. This work is made possible through continued partnership with the Vermont Department of Health.

'Case for the Missing R' Article Goes Viral

Personalized Learning Plans

The reason why PLPs matter:



PLP team approach

Roles for students, teachers and parents/guardians



Update on Resources

NEW! Act 77 Resources

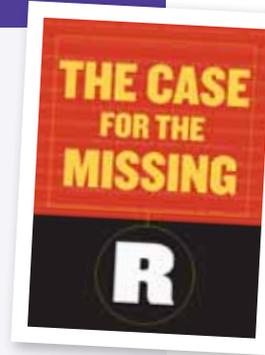
Act 77 One Page Overview and Infographic: tinyurl.com/UP-act77overview

Personalized Learning Plan Infographic for students, teachers, parents and guardians: tinyurl.com/UP-PLPinfographic

Updated! M3: Mindset, Metacognition, and Motivation.

This newly revised guide is a resource for teachers and students to explore

(1) the impact of mindsets and expectations on student achievement, (2) metacognition and the neuropsychology of learning, and (3) key variables to increase motivation by increasing the level of engagement in any learning experience. Most activities have been designed to share with students, teachers, and community members as a means to build fluency in the language of learning for all stakeholders. tinyurl.com/UP-M3guide



This summer UP for Learning faculty members Helen, Peter, and Martha wrote an article, "The Case for the Missing R," exploring shared responsibility and the importance of viewing students as active participants in shaping

their education. The article was published in the June 2015 digital issue of Educational Leadership and on the www.ASCD.org website. The article was viewed 5,370 times in its first month of publication; we don't know how many more (millions) since then. You can read the article here: tinyurl.com/UP-missingR

Funding Update

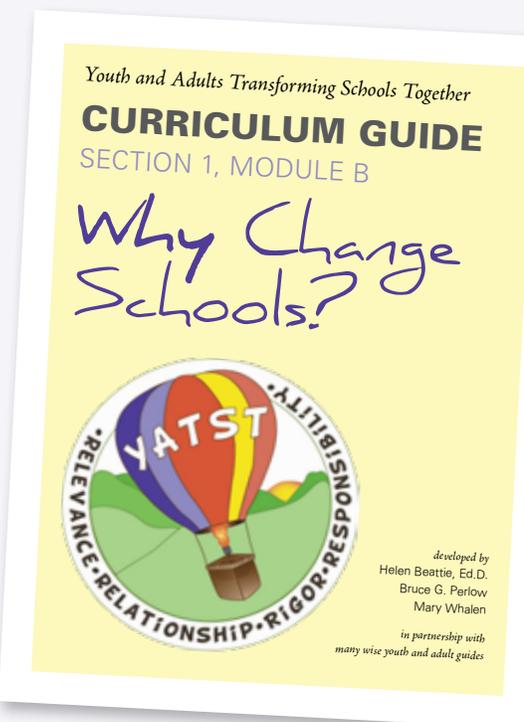
The M3: Mindset, Metacognition and Motivation initiative was awarded a grant from the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation President's Grant Fund of the Princeton Area Community Foundation** to expand, enhance, and evaluate the model over the course of this academic year. This support supplements the **Vermont Department of Health** resources for this effort.

The **Agency of Education** has extended support for seven schools engaged in the Communicating School Redesign course, building statewide capacity for the second year in a row. This funding matched the **Vermont School Boards Association's** allocation for this work, supported by the **Bay and Paul Foundations**.

NEW! Video: Unleashing Partnership. This film is a collage of statewide efforts in progress, showcasing examples of what's possible when students and teachers work together to take "the game" out of education and bring it back to real life. Produced in collaboration with the Vermont Folklife Center. tinyurl.com/UP-unleashing

Updated! YATST Curriculum Guide Modules: Section 1.

The YATST Curriculum Guide is a resource for Youth-Adult teams involved with YATST and Communicating School Redesign to guide their work and provide resources and activities to engage others in dialogue. Section 1 has now been Updated to meet the needs not only of YATST school teams, but any team working to redesign schools, addressing the questions: Why Change Schools? What is our Work? What is Engagement and the 4 Rs? and What does a Transformed School Look Like? tinyurl.com/YATST-module1



◀ M3, continued from page 1

and were awarded \$30,000 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation President's Grant Fund of the Princeton Area Community Foundation, to update and disseminate the curriculum. Additionally, the Vermont Department of Health applied prevention funds to underwrite one half of the cost for school teams, recognizing the potential positive impact of students taking on this meaningful role back in their schools.

This year, six high school youth-adult teams spent a day immersed in activities about the science of learning and means to build a growth mindset. Participants developed plans to be effective messengers of this information back at home with peers, teachers, and parents, supported by a curriculum guide and consultation with a communications expert. UP is offering school-based coaching throughout the implementation process and developing new materials for school use throughout the year.

How does M3 support current change in Vermont?

This knowledge ensures that ALL students can take full advantage of the new options available to them through the Act 77: Flexible Pathways legislation. Vermont is personalizing learning to ensure that all students are competent and confident as they pursue their life goals. Act 77 is the means to this end, with students playing a far more active role in shaping their educational experience. Once students assess their own strengths and interests, they explore alternative means to master core content through such options as community- or work-based experiences, online options or early college possibilities. They craft their own plan, with the support of adults, to meet rigorous graduation requirements with a combination of classroom work and these other varied options. This plan is reassessed and tuned each year.

This opportunity marks a significant shift in student and teacher roles and responsibilities. An increase in personalization of learning requires more self-initiative and independent learning capacity on the part of students, while teachers take on the role of facilitators and guides.

Shared responsibility in learning requires new knowledge and skills

The evolving roles and responsibilities in learning—a major culture shift in Vermont schools for both youth and adults—requires intentional skill building and support. M3 is one critical piece of this effort.

A recent article in the Phi Delta Kappan journal about learner-centered schooling identified the number one challenge to

personalization as “student mindsets: making the switch from passive, teacher-directed learning to active, self-directed learning.” (S. Aslan & C. Reigeluth, “Examining the Challenges of Learner-centered Education,” December 2015, p.63-67)

Closer to home, Jason Finley, the work-based learning coordinator at Randolph Technical Career Center and Rowland Fellow, recently wrote a compelling article about a fear that personalized learning could feed inequity in Vermont schools. He noted two primary solutions, both requiring educator training, to (1) explore our own mental models of student potential and our unconscious biases, and 2) instill growth mindsets and promote self-esteem in students. (vtdigger.org/2015/12/13/jason-findley-the-equity-traps-within-act-77)

This kind of focused training is particularly necessary given the findings from UP's Communicating School Redesign teams. Conducting research on student readiness for personalized learning, they surfaced significant peer skepticism of students' ability to take on increased levels of responsibility as independent learners.

The power of learning about learning

M3 provides concrete tools and strategies to build learning capacity. More importantly, it instills a belief in one's own potential and that of others, and our collective responsibility to act on this understanding. This culture shift is essential to effective implementation of Act 77: Flexible Pathways, and to a vision of equitable access of all students to quality education throughout Vermont. It will be one of the most powerful means available to kindle and sustain the fire that is essential to lifelong learning.

What have the M3 schools been up to?

- Kicking off a campaign: “Being smart...it's not magic,” distributing bracelets, pencils, and key chains with this motto
- Creating a physical model of Dr. David Sousa's “Information Processing Model” so that students understand the learning process
- Developing a “Paving Your Own Path” campaign, in conjunction with communicating Act 77 implementation
- Crafting a parent meeting with a focus on growth mindset
- Integrating mindset training into the spring 9th-grade orientation
- Orienting the school board to the themes of mindset, metacognition, and motivation
- Helping shape the content of a “Brain and Learning” professional learning community faculty meeting

Youth as Partners in Education Quality Reviews

The Vermont Agency of Education has made an important commitment to student voice in developing a new accountability system called Education Quality Reviews (EQR). The review process aims to help schools “deliver on the promise” of recently adopted quality standards. The goal is to gather evidence and promote best practices in five areas: proficiency-based learning, personalized pathways to graduation, safe school environments, high-quality staffing, and financially efficient practices. Students will help accomplish that goal.

This is the first time students have been engaged directly in school evaluation statewide. Deputy Secretary of Education Amy Fowler, who is leading the pilot, made the intention clear in announcing the initiative in September: “By involving students in the reviews of their own school systems, we help keep student voice at the center of the conversation about what students need from their schools.”

To get the whole picture on educational progress, the Agency will do more than collect annual data reports from school districts. AOE personnel want to see learning in action—by visiting schools, observing classrooms, reading documents, and talking with the people who are there every day, from students to superintendents. While Agency personnel will lead the site visits, there will be a peer review component as well; local educators and students will work in youth-adult teams to gather evidence during the intensive, one-day visits.

This part of the evaluation process, called Integrated Field Review (IFR), is in the pilot stage this year with sixteen

volunteer districts. The current plan is to begin a three-year cycle next year, so that every supervisory union can participate in IFR soon. The plan also commits to making local students active partners in every one of those reviews.



To support student success in this demanding role, the Agency of Education has engaged UP for Learning to provide a day of specialized training for students, preceding the two-day training for full youth-adult teams. To design and conduct these workshops, UP faculty Martha Rich and Bruce Perlow have worked with youth co-facilitator Jake Wilkins, a junior at Milton

High School and veteran of last year’s Collaborative Peer Review project at Leland & Gray, Otter Valley, and Mill River. With two rounds of training completed this fall and two more pending in the

spring, the results have been encouraging. The UP team is adapting training to the Agency’s pilot design as it develops, focusing on key concepts in EQR along with support for authentic youth-adult teamwork. “All of us, participants and leaders, are learning a lot each time we do this,” says Martha. “It’s great to have the room to be flexible and keep improving.”

While student participants find the technical language of school reform challenging, they’re ready to learn, and they’re enthusiastic about the initiative’s potential. As one wrote: “I hope that this process will bring about meaningful change to our education system that reflects what students need.” Another put it this way: “I hope that after the process is complete students throughout the state are excited about their education and feel as though they are the priority.”

We don’t just need to educate the community about the changes that will be taking place in our educational system, we need to change the policies and culture in order to prepare for those changes.

—Ryland O’Connell, student

Shaping Our Future Together: Communicating School Redesign

UP for Learning is an integral partner in Vermont's efforts to build public understanding and support for Act 77 and proficiency-based learning, through the initiative called Communicating School Redesign (CSR). Funding from the Agency of Education and the Vermont School Boards Association has enabled UP to partner with the School Project Foundation and the Grayson Group to develop complementary grassroots and statewide communications efforts for the second year in a row. Last year, five school teams committed the year to learning communications theory, becoming proficient facilitators, and crafting local campaigns. Simultaneously, a new Shaping Our Future Together: Communicating School Redesign website was created to assist all schools as they build support for Act 77, the flexible pathways legislation (www.shapingourfuturetogether.org).

This year our charge has been expanded to build public understanding and support for both Act 77 and proficiency-based learning. The list of involved schools has grown to seven, with greater geographic diversity than ever before. Our reach stretches from BFA Fairfax in the northern part of the state, to Mt. Anthony on the Massachusetts border. South Royalton, Rochester, Chelsea, Whitcomb, and Hazen Union complete the list. Youth-adult teams from these schools have met for four days so far this year, to learn communications theory and effective dialogue strategies.

Thank You, Jane

We extend a special thanks to Jane Feinberg, of Full Frame Communications, who partnered with Helen Beattie to create the Communicating School Redesign pilot during the 2013-14 school year and co-taught the course last year. Jane's depth of expertise with strategic framing theory, extensive experience in school redesign consulting, and passion for supporting youth and adults as change agents laid the foundation for the current efforts. As Jane moves into new arenas in her professional pursuits, we remain deeply grateful for her commitment to Vermont's change agenda and her contributions to creating a model that is now sustainable.



They have conducted extensive research to map their communities' mental models of education and learning; based on those findings, they have designed local communications campaigns.

The campaigns are now underway, including student-led facilitation of student-teacher advisory groups and faculty meetings to explore the opportunities inherent in Act 77: Flexible Pathways and the relationship of personalized learning to current brain research. A number of schools aim to build school cultures that embrace a growth mindset, dispelling preconceived limiting notions of learning potential. Campaigns are using both traditional communications strategies, such as opinion editorials in local newspapers, and new social media strategies, such as an Instagram campaign.

We are also producing statewide tools and strategies to help schools spark dialogue about the changes at hand, including a new two-page flyer and infographic explaining Act 77, and a similar offering on proficiency-based learning. Two videos are also in the works. The first will provide an overview of personalized learning plans, while the second will explain the basics of proficiency-based learning with whiteboard animation.

Two winter "studio days" will provide a forum for current and past CSR teams to gather and advance their planning, while they network, explore shared issues, and tune each other's work. These days, devoted to sharing work-in-progress, will help mobilize collective capacity and strengthen communications practice across the state.



Shaping Our Future Together Music Video Project and Roadshow

UP For Learning, in partnership with Cabot School and LaunchPad, are proud to announce Sound Check! Shaping Our Future Together Music Video Project and Roadshow.

Calling Aspiring Student Songwriters, Musicians, Poets, Lyricists and Filmmakers

We are searching for 20 Vermont students to dream big — to join a landmark media arts project and be part of something monumental.

The Project

Over the course of the spring semester we will produce an original music video featuring over 150 Vermont students singers and musicians.

Charged with the mission of amplifying student voice through songwriting and film, our music video will help usher in a new era of teaching and learning. Ultimately our video will serve as a powerful messaging tool to communities in Vermont and across the nation about the urgent need for student voice and agency in schools.

I Dream of a School

What kind of future do you dream for yourself? What kind of school do you need to realize that dream?

Are you ready to shape the future? Learn more and apply today at www.launchpad.li.

Welcome to Our New Communications Coordinator

Continued growth at UP for Learning means an increasing number of stories to share. To help us celebrate the work of so many



schools, we're excited to welcome a new Communications Coordinator: **Sue Trecartin**.

Sue, now retired, comes to UP with a strong belief in youth-adult partnership from 18 years as a language arts teacher at Barre Town Elementary School and Hazen Union School in Hardwick. As a teacher-facilitator, Sue always looked for ways to empower students to take charge of their learning. She worked with Helen on early iterations of a student feedback system at Hazen. Sue's teaching was strongly influenced by her graduate study at Middlebury College's School of English. As a member of the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network, she spent summers learning and planning with teacher colleagues for the student exchanges that took place during the school year between classrooms across the country.

Be sure to check out UP for Learning's Facebook page ([facebook.com/upforlearning](https://www.facebook.com/upforlearning)) and website (upforlearning.com) for regularly posted school stories!

THE ROWLAND foundation
5TH ANNUAL
 STATEWIDE
CONFERENCE

Keynote
 Address
DR.
YONG
ZHAO



Connections in All Directions

Helen Beattie, UP Executive Director; Erin Dezell, UP Assistant Director; Dylan McAllister, **Student Representative of the Vermont State School Board** and senior at **Hazen Union High School**; and Harry Frank of the **Vermont School Board Association** and UP for Learning Board of Directors chair, presented at the 2015 Vermont School Boards Association/Vermont Superintendents Association annual conference in late October (Dylan and Helen are pictured at right). The group led a workshop titled Policy Governance: Community Engagement. The workshop explored the story of the Hazen Union High School Communicating School Redesign team and how they have engaged their community in an ongoing dialogue on Act 77: Flexible Pathways.



UP for Learning is joining forces with **Vermont After-school, Inc.** to help bring forward the wisdom and experience of adults, youth, community members and organizations currently offering engaging expanded learning opportunities throughout Vermont. We will partner to host a spring seminar for all three stakeholder groups, paying particular attention to the expressed needs of young people in choosing field-based options in their pathway to graduation. Helen offered testimony at the **Expanded Learning Opportunities Working Group** meeting on November 5 to highlight the need to support schools as they increase

access to innovative learning opportunities. She also announced the seminar partnership at that time.

Mary Schell Whalen collaborated with Vermont educators, the **Great Schools Partnership**, and the **Vermont Agency of Education** on the development of **Vermont Transferable Skills Assessment Supports (VTSAS)** scoring criteria for the Transferable Skills of “Self-Direction” and “Responsible and Involved Citizenship.” The scoring criteria drafted for each of these skill sets will be invaluable supports for schools as they define the transferable skills for students and incorporate them into the school experience. The scoring criteria and sample tasks will be available by the end of the summer on the Vermont Agency of Education

website.

Following Dr. Yong Zhao’s keynote address, student participants explored the collective purpose of education and shared the global issues that spark their curiosity at the **Fifth Annual Rowland Foundation Conference**, on the theme Learning without Boundaries: Creativity, Social Responsibility, and Global Savvy. These are topics that could be central to their own individual learning and their personalized learning plans. Workshop facilitators included Dylan MacAllister, **Student Representative of the Vermont State School Board** and Senior at **Hazen Union High**

School; Kayle Christy, Junior at **Blue Mountain Union School;** Erin Dezell, Assistant Director at UP for Learning; Anne Bergeron, Rowland Fellow and Teacher at Blue Mountain Union School; and Mary Schell Whalen, Rowland Fellow and Director at UP for Learning.

The UVM Fall 2015 graduate course on **Mixed Methods Research**, taught by Dr. Bernice Garnett, Professor, College of Education and Social Services, hosted a presentation by Mary Whalen and Helen Beattie.

At the **Vermont Learning for the Future Strategic Summit** held on December 4 and 5, UP for Learning joined other many non-profit education partners, parents, educators, students, administrators, government representatives, funders, community education advocates, and policymakers to examine a 360° view of Vermont's education/learning system and opportunities to promote youth-adult partnership and agency. The summit was hosted by the **Bay and Paul Foundations.**

Everyday Democracy, a national organization based in Hartford, CT, has asked UP for Learning to share a number of our dialogue strategies from the Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together curriculum guide, to help communities explore why schools need to change. They will be incorporated into a new activity guide.

UP for Learning has engaged Steve Netcoh from the **University of Vermont** to conduct the M3: Mindset, Metacognition and Motivation year-end evaluation and Dr. Catharine Biddle from the **University of Maine** to conduct the year-end Communicating School Redesign evaluation.

Plans are well underway with our **University of Vermont** and **Pennsylvania State University** partners for the **International Seminar: Amplifying Student Voice and Partnership**, to be held at UVM July 6-8. Early registration results suggest that we will have participants from at least eight other countries joining us (Hong Kong, Canada, England, Ireland, Netherlands, Scotland, New Zealand, and Australia), in addition to a wide geographic range from within the U.S.

It is amazing to work with students in this class as equal partners in bringing these positive changes to our school.

—Paul Chapman, adult CSR participant



UPcoming Events

Communicating School Redesign (CSR)

CSR Class: Wednesday, January 27

CSR Webinar: TBD February

CSR Studio Day: Thursday, March 10

CSR Webinar: TBD March

CSR Final Meeting and Presentation to the Vermont State Board of Education: Thursday, May 17

Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together (YATST)

Facilitation Training North: Thursday, February 11

Facilitation Training

South: Friday, February 12

Design Day: Wednesday March 30

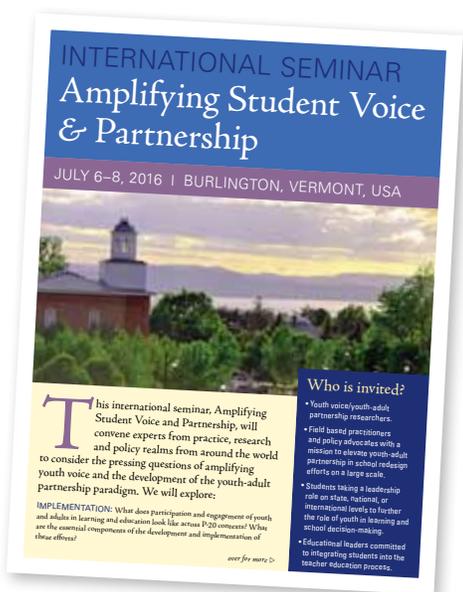
Power²: Youth and Adults Shaping Vermont Education Together: A Summit to Inspire and Inform

Wednesday, April 27, Lake Morey

UP Board of Directors

Board Meeting: Saturday, January 23

Board Meeting: Saturday, May 14



Amplifying Student Voice & Partnership: An International Seminar

This invitation-only seminar will convene experts in practice, research, and policy from around the world to consider the pressing questions of amplifying youth voice and developing the youth-adult partnership paradigm. The three-day conference will explore implementation of youth-adult partnership across P-20 contexts, evaluation of youth voice, partnership and leadership, and how to develop sustainable means of youth-adult partnership.

The University of Vermont Education Department, the Donald J. Willower Center for the Study of Leadership & Ethics at Pennsylvania State University, and UP for Learning will join in hosting this important gathering.

The International Seminar will take place July 6–8, 2016, at the University of Vermont in Burlington. The seminar is made possible by generous support from the Bay & Paul Foundations.

‘Power Squared’ Summit Returns

What does it look and sound like when young people partner with adults as they shape their educational experience and redesign schools to provide flexible pathways and personalized learning? The evidence in Vermont schools is abundant. Sharing that evidence is the focus of the Power² Summit, as youth and adults co-lead a dozen workshops showcasing examples from around the state. It’s a day to explore the power of youth-adult partnership as a dynamic force for shaping the future of Vermont education.

Last April nearly 200 people gathered for the first summit at the Lake Morey Inn in Fairlee, VT. The Power² Summit will return this coming April 2016, to convene high school students, teachers, administrators, school board members, and other partners working together for school change. Presenting teams will continue to move the concept of partnership from theory to practice and inspire us all with a range and depth of possibilities. Given Vermont’s change agenda, we have never had a better opportunity to promote youth-adult partnership as a central strategy for school improvement.

The conference is a collaborative effort among local and national organizations working directly with Vermont schools: UP for Learning, Shelburne Farms, the Partnership for Change, Big Picture Learning, and the School Project Foundation, with support from the Bay & Paul Foundations.

[Act 77] is the beginning to a revolution in the education world, a revolution that will teach the young adults of the world to be more independent, but also, to teach them that they can do anything that you set your mind to.

— Nikole Garand, student, Chelsea



The Lamoille Union High School team at the YATST orientation.

YATST School Updates

Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together (YATST) has a new depth and reach with increasing attendance at statewide trainings, active networking of schools between meetings, and consistent on- and off-site coaching. Twelve schools this year are actively engaged in the YATST participatory action research model—our highest number of member schools to date. YATST continues to be our deepest, most systemic change effort to shift school pedagogy and increase engagement.

Blue Mountain Union School: Action Research Projects

This year Blue Mountain Union School’s YATST class was led by two returning students utilizing the YATST curriculum and writing project proposals for group projects, building on research conducted by last year’s YATST class. Projects for this year under consideration include increasing Independent Study opportunities and End-of-Year study opportunities.

Burlington High School: Comparative Education Site Visit

Along with ongoing collaborative efforts to support BHS’ new Advisory Program and Graduate Expectations, the School Innovation Seminar continues to explore unique learning environments. Students visited Burr & Burton’s Mountain Campus to learn about their experiential, place-based, student-centered model, staying over in a cabin without electricity or running water, and working with Mountain Campus students and teachers. The trip was a wonderful opportunity to get out of our urban/suburban setting, and to explore a place-based learning environment. Here is a window into the reflections of two students:

When students were split into groups for their rotating activities, I noticed the “learning” that these students usually experience is not like the average classroom in school. Some students were assigned to chop wood,

continued on page 12 ►

YATST School UPdates

◀ continued from page 11

to prepare lunch, to clean, and even to work on trail maintenance. My first thought was that this seemed like chores--however these chores were important to be exposed to. Not only do they teach students how to master everyday activities and skills, they also allow students to develop a sense of responsibility and connection.

At the Mountain Campus, this sense of connection allowed students to have an open mindset and a drive. After talking with students, I discovered that the motivation that they possess, comes from within. These students enjoy their learning, and are filled with intrinsic motivation. Student inquiries, for example, showcase student determination for pursuing specific interests. Students felt connected, and motivated--something we don't always see in the classroom.

—Thu Pham

During my visit, I followed parts of a typical student schedule, including chores, meals, and reflection time. Mountain Campus students told me about highlights of their program, including their independent projects. My biggest takeaway from the discussions was how passionate each student was about their learning. It was clear that the students wanted to make a valuable difference in their community.

A particular conversation that impacted me was with a girl who recently moved from Florida. She said that she was assigned to this program and wasn't there by choice. She shared how she started off hating every minute of the school, the people, and Vermont. However, after a month this school became her new home and the

people became her new family. She now tells everyone how grateful she is for this opportunity and can't stand to think about leaving. Before hearing her story, I had never heard anyone express such a connection to their school. It made me realize that school can provide a sense of home and belonging. I would hope that every student

can connect to their school, or at least an aspect of it, the same way this Mountain Campus student did. The experience inspires me to find ways to make students at my school feel a similar sense of home and belonging.

—Sarah Montroll



Craftsbury Academy: Café Conversations

The Craftsbury Student Senate (YATST works within Student Senate) is working to gather information from students and staff through a Café Protocol. While editing the new survey the team decided that as small a school as we are, we would get the information we desired from a structured face-to-face conversation instead of a survey. To that end we started developing key questions and designed the setting of the meeting. Future planning meetings will focus on how the interview rotations will work, how the conversations and data will be recorded, and how we will analyze the information we gather.

Fair Haven Union High School: Laying a Foundation and Making Connections

FHUHS is in its first year of YATST and has worked to come together as a team and to inform students, teachers, and greater school community of YATST's mission and vi-

continued on page 13 ►

YATST School Updates

◀ continued from page 12

sion through a school-wide assembly. The team has learned about each other and the strengths they bring to collaborative work through the Compass Points activity. They have spent time as a team grounding their understanding of the concepts of Rigor, Relevance, Relationships, and shared Responsibility - the 4 Rs. FHYATST has been building their understanding of the action research cycle and presented to school staff in November, facilitating a Chalktalk to build understanding of YATST and the team's work ahead. FHYATST was well received, and got helpful information to inform our survey. We have also presented YATST and the goals we have for our work to students at a school-wide assembly. The opportunities to network and collaborate with other YATST teams from across the state doing similar work in their schools has been a highlight and an inspiration. FHYATST is very excited to build youth-adult partnerships and establish a greater student voice in decision-making to influence change at FHUHS!

Green Mountain Union High School: Film as a Means to Communicate Data & Students Involved with Proficiency Professional Development

The GM YATST team has been busy with trainings and conferences this fall and are now in the process of sharing data with their school community. Students have decided to make a movie to illustrate the data from student and teacher surveys and will share the movie with students in an assembly. GM YATST have also been working with teachers at their professional development sessions where they are learning about proficiency-based education. They feel strongly that student voice should be part of this transition. GM YATST visited Otter Valley to look at the way schools tackle issues around engagement and student voice in decision-making. They hope to visit more YATST schools

in the next few months to gather information and ideas for changes they could make here at Green Mountain.

Harwood Union High School: Student-Teacher Feedback Process Roll Out

Celebrations are in order for HUYATST for their commitment to honoring student feedback in shaping teaching and learning through a teacher feedback/student reflection process. After developing a feedback survey for students to provide teachers with authentic feedback, HUYATST shepherded the effort through Harwood's democratic decision-making H1 process. The team is exploring the best ways to communicate the survey tool with teachers and students, as well as the best process for teachers to engage in the resulting feedback through direct dialogue with students.

Hazen Union High School: YATST Activities Integrated into Teacher-Student Advisories

Youth and Adults Transforming Schools at Hazen has taken on an expanded role this year, collaborating with Communicating School Redesign (CSR) efforts to provide resources to students and teachers to learn about how to promote a growth mindset for students. The

administration and YATST and CSR students are empowering a group of Teacher Advisory students to join all middle school and high school TAs by facilitating learning activities. In addition, some of our high school YATST members are also collaborating on the action research cycle based on the analysis of our Youth Risk Behavior Survey data. YATST members facilitated an all-high-school chalk talk to reflect on an inspiring and informative presentation by a guest speaker on diversity and prejudice. In an effort to address Relevance and Relationships we are arranging Hazen's second "Mix it Up at Lunch" Day. As you can see, the role of a YATST member at Hazen is growing!



Members of the Green Mountain Union High School team head to the Montpelier orientation.

continued on page 14 ►

YATST School Updates

◀ continued from page 13

Lamoille Union High School: Rallying Around Engagement

As a first-year YATST school, LUHS has established their YATST team and has discussed ideas for addressing their focus around student engagement. LUHS-YATST has just facilitated grade-level assemblies to share YATST and explore engagement. During the assembly, students participated in “Too Many Sitting” and took the survey. Students hope to begin analyzing the results early in 2016.



Otter Valley Union High School: Teacher Student Advisories and School Site Visits

OV YATST began this year working to help support the first year of a new advisory program which resulted from YATST work over the past two years. The team created and implemented a survey to assess how the program is working and what adjustments need to be made. OV YATST has also begun a process of sending small groups of OV YATSTers to visit other schools around the state to look at specific programs that can help to improve similar programs at Otter Valley or be added to enhance the educational experiences of and opportunities for students. These visits examine programs like advisory and also build relationships. OV YATST also hosted the Green Mountain YATST team and shared their work and school. Through the winter and spring OV YATST will be implementing a second YATST survey, the first being done two years ago, to identify change in key areas and gather new data to support our work.

Twinfield Union High School: Survey Data Analysis and Upcoming Dialogue

YATST is back and better than ever! This fall, TUYATST surveyed high school students and teachers to try to identify areas where they can focus our work for the coming year to make the school stronger. TUYATST analyzed the data during a retreat and identified several areas into which they want to dig deeper.

The YATST team will be sharing the data with the whole high school, and call on the high school student body for



some exciting conversations about how we can work together to create change and make teaching and learning more accessible and engaging for all. They look forward to working hard this year to continue the long tradition of strong student voice at Twinfield.

Williamstown Middle High School: Student-Teacher Feedback Process Roll-Out

WMHS has been working hard this year on a feedback form plan for the school. They created a document of questions with the 4 Rs (Rigor, Relevance, Relationships, Responsibility), with about three to four questions in each category. WMHS YATST had a faculty meeting where the students presented this form by talking about the mission of YATST, the history of YATST at Williamstown school, and where we are heading. They gave the feedback forms to the teachers so they could see the questions that would be asked at the end of the semester. The YATST students will have a “how to” discussion with each class about constructive feedback and the importance of open dialogue in the classroom. They are excited to pilot this at the end of January!

continued on page 15 ►

YATST School UPdates

◀ continued from page 14

U-32: Reaching Out in Many Places

Last year U-32 held schoolwide assemblies to engage the high school in understanding the 4-Rs and statistics about student engagement. The “Too Many Sitting” activity was a model that many YATST teams replicated this year as an introduction to their YATST survey. This year U-32 jumped into the year giving high school students and teachers the survey and analyzing the data and prioritizing strengths, concerns, and puzzling gaps. They have shared some of the data priorities on posters, graffiti walls, and meetings with administrators. They have more sharing and dialogue sessions planned, to continue to generate more awareness and continue to develop actions to build engagement in teaching and learning.

YATST also involves some serious pipecleaner fun...



Join the ‘I Dream of a School...’ Instagram Campaign



What sort of school do you dream of? Join youth, educators, and community

members from around the state in participating in an Instagram campaign to create a vision for an ideal school and shape our future together! The more participants the better, creating a learning “buzzzz” around the state. There will likely be many direct connections between the expressed dreams and the opportunities inherent in Act 77 — perfect dialogue starters!

WHAT TO DO:

1. **Create a short Instagram video** (15 seconds or less), or take a picture of yourself with your written response answering the prompt “I dream of a school where...”
2. Post the video or picture to Instagram using the hashtag **#idreamofaschool**. Don’t forget to tag UP for Learning: **@UPforLearning**
3. You can also **include a hashtag for your school** or organization! For example, **#MontpelierHighSchool** or **#VTAgencyofEducation**.



Fostering student voice—empowering youth to express their opinions and influence their educational experiences so that they feel they have a stake in the outcomes—is one of the most powerful tools schools have to increase learning.

— Toshalis and Nakkula,
“Motivation, Engagement
and Student Voice”
Executive Summary, 2012

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.



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.