

# Communicating School Redesign

## 2018–19 Initiative & Course



“I had many opportunities to listen to youth; they reflected such a high level of introspection and passion. My take away was simple — that is **no longer can change occur in education without the adult-youth partnership.**”

—principal & team member

**UP**  
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Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning

### What is the opportunity?

Vermont has always been a national and international leader in education. The current implementation of Legislative Act 77 and movement toward proficiency-based learning demonstrate our commitment to innovation as part of ensuring strong schools and strong communities. Concurrently, a number of schools are considering the International Baccalaureate model or are developing a specific approach to learning, such as project-based methods, as the focus of their learning model.

Ambitious policy implementation must be coupled with an ambitious communications approach to build public understanding and support for change. The Communicating School Redesign Initiative and course is a means to this end, building acceptance and advocacy for innovative practices.

**Communicating School Redesign (CSR)** is founded on an evidence-based strategy for building public will for school change. This strategy has three parts:

- Creating a common narrative based on a research-based approach
- Identifying opportunities for meaningful dialogue in school and community
- Engaging youth and adults as change agent partners

In the 2018–2019 academic year, up to six Vermont schools will be selected to participate in this initiative, which includes a credit bearing course to guide them in developing and implementing their customized communications campaign. In addition to receiving training and ongoing coaching, each team will conduct research in order to shape its own local communications campaign. Teams will reach out to students, teachers, parents, and the community by leading small and large discussion forums, employing traditional media (press releases, opinion editorials, etc.), social media and web development, and potentially producing original videos. They will enjoy the mentorship of course alumni from previous years, becoming part of a growing cadre of teams that are capable agents for school change.



“Students are often told to just go with things, or their input is not sought for, but **once students are part of the change that will happen to them, things will change much smoother.** When students have a say, they feel like they matter — and what could possibly be more important for a student?”

—high school student & team member



A variety of tools and strategies have been developed and field-tested by more than 20 Vermont school teams over the past five years, and are serving as prototypes for Vermont and the rest of New England.

### Who is involved?

Teams are composed of two to four adults and four to six youth (eight maximum) per school. The team should include members of committees who are orchestrating change in their schools (PLP, PBGR, International Baccalaureate, project-based learning) to ensure that this work is informed by, and integral to, implementation efforts. Team members will serve as in-house consultants and initiators of effective communications strategies.

### What is the team’s commitment?

Each team will meet regularly (at least 30–45 minutes weekly on average) at their school in order to design, implement, and assess a comprehensive public understanding and engagement strategy. They will also conduct survey research early in the year to take the pulse of their community on issues related to education and learning. **The team’s ultimate impact is directly correlated with their ability to commit to these regular meetings.**

In order to gain the knowledge and skills required to accomplish this goal, the team will participate in all capacity-building opportunities as noted below:

**Seminar Days 1 & 2: Orientation:** September 13 and 14, 2018. The initial two-day training includes an introduction to the work itself through examples of prior CSR schools, an introduction to a research-based approach to communications development, and development of survey efforts to map your community’s mental models of education and learning.

**Seminar Day 3: Facilitation Training:** October 5, 2018. Participants will build facilitation skills to plan and lead public forums that are engaging and inclusive.

**Seminar Day 4: Data Analysis:** November 2, 2018. Teams will analyze their mental models data, receive additional communications training and begin to develop their campaign goals and methods.

**Seminar Days 5 & 6: Studio Days:** December 7, 2018, February 1, 2019 and March 1, 2019. These days provide opportunities for continued skill building, peer feedback, consultant support and team planning time. Teams are expected to attend at least two of these three Studio Day options, dependent on their implementation plan needs.

**Seminar Day 7: Culmination & Celebration:** May 3, 2019. Teams will reflect, showcase and celebrate their accomplishments, and plan for continuation of communications efforts in the coming year.

**On- and off-site coaching** by the leadership team will guide the teams’ work. (see next page).

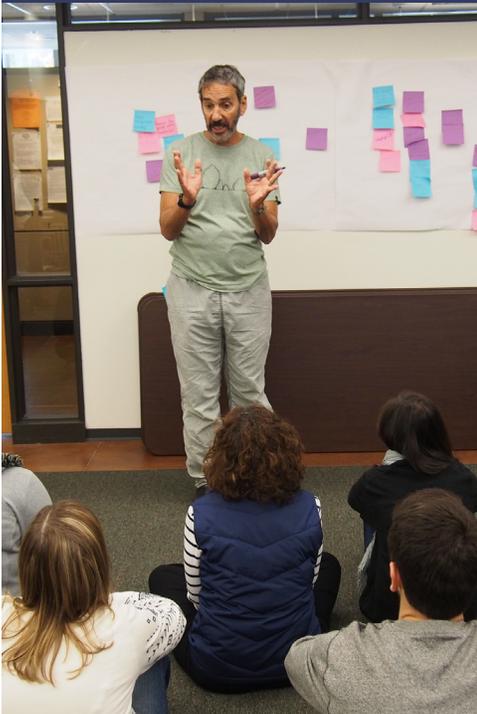
### What are the specific responsibilities of team members?

High school students can enroll in a dual enrollment course to structure and honor their commitment to this significant work or create an independent



“I believe that **all of the schools that are present are innovative** or they would not be willing to partake in this work. What is exciting about that is the opportunity to learn from each other.”

—guidance counselor & team member



study and receive proficiency-based high school credit for their efforts. Adult team members can choose to enroll in a 3 graduate credit course or receive professional development hours toward recertification. Class expectations for adults and course requirements for youth team participants remain the same regardless of the source of credit.

A commitment to attend all gatherings, engage in weekly school-based work, and participate in web-based assignments is essential to the success of this program.

## Who is providing these capacity-building opportunities?

**Helen Beattie, Ed.D.**, is executive director of Vermont’s Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning (UP for Learning), previously known as YATST (Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together), which has received national recognition for innovative means to incorporate youth as partners in school redesign efforts.

**Daniel Baron, M.S.**, is a founder of and a national trainer for the School Reform Initiative, and director of the School Project Foundation. Daniel is a widely recognized national facilitator trainer and systems level consultant, currently working with the Burlington School District one week per month.

## Cost

Base cost per school is \$1,500, plus professional development/graduate credit costs for at least two faculty and any dual enrollment costs:

	Cost Per Adult	Cost Per Youth
3 Credit Course (Southern New Hampshire University)	\$1,938	N/A
Professional Development Hours	\$1,608	
Dual Enrollment Course	N/A	\$110
Independent Study/Proficiency-Based High School Credit		\$0

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## Applications Due by May 6, 2018

- Apply online at [upforlearning.org/initiatives/communicating-school-redesign](http://upforlearning.org/initiatives/communicating-school-redesign).
- You will be contacted for an interview and notified of acceptance by June 2.
- For more info, contact Helen Beattie at [helen@upforlearning.org](mailto:helen@upforlearning.org).