

# UP for Learning

## Unleashing the Power of Youth-Adult Partnership

**WE MUST EMPOWER YOUTH** by ensuring every young person is known and valued in their community, has a sense of purpose, and has the ability to shape their own lives and the lives of others.



### WHY?

Vermont is losing the potential of too many of our young people by allowing a **widening opportunity gap** to limit their possibilities.

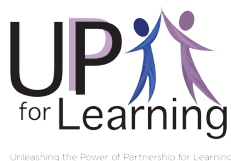
### RESULT:

- **DISENGAGEMENT** from learning
- Sense of **HOPELESSNESS**
- Decrease in **CRITICAL LIFE SKILL** development
- Decrease in high school completion and **POST-SECONDARY OPTIONS**
- Decrease in **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

“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 & Nakkula,  
Motivation, Engagement, &  
Student Voice, 2012

### UP'S ANSWER...



### SINCE 2008...

Over **2,700** youth have taken on active leadership roles in at least one of UP's initiatives.

UP has worked with **44%** of Vermont middle schools and **95%** of Vermont high schools in all 14 counties

UP has trained student leaders through **337 programs** in a total of **113 Vermont schools**

**135** educators have completed an UP graduate course.

## UP for Learning empowers youth to *innovate, collaborate & lead*

UP for Learning is a nonprofit dedicated to amplifying the role of youth as partners and agents of change in education to ensure that youth:

- **Gain ownership for their learning**
- **Participate actively in school change**
- **Have personal power and purpose**
- **Possess leadership skills**
- **Are civically engaged**

To achieve these outcomes, UP for Learning crafts innovative, student-centered education initiatives and supports schools with customized training, coaching, graduate courses, professional development, and online resources. We are an active contributor to national and international efforts to put students at the center of their education.

“I was reminded of how much power we have as individuals to **change our own world and the world of others...for the better.**”

—UP youth participant



“When people ask me for an example of high-quality work on student voice and youth-adult partnerships, **I always send them to UP for Learning.** It is the premier nonprofit in the nation that draws upon evidence-based practice and research to carefully design projects aimed at improving schools and empowering young people.”

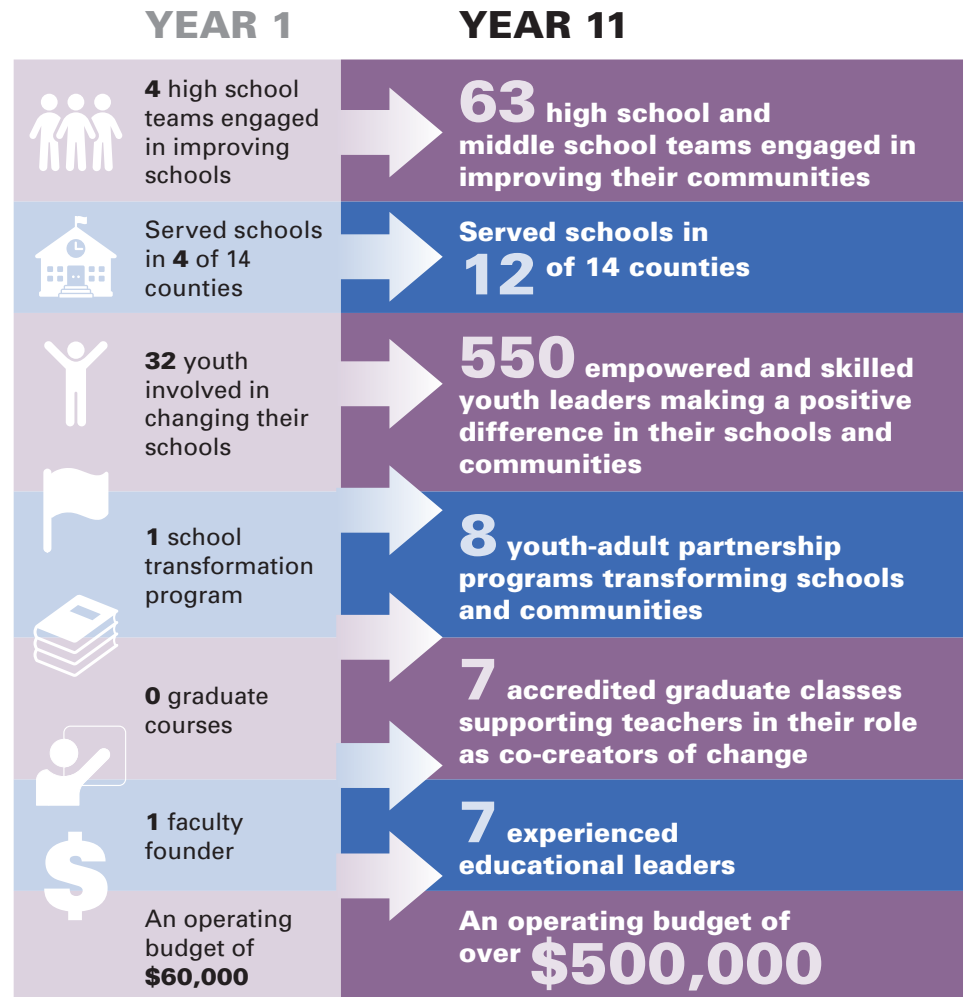
—Dr. Dana Mitra, Pennsylvania State University, national leader in youth-adult partnership research and practices



UP for Learning spearheaded the **International Seminar on Amplifying Student Voice & Partnership** for 3 years, convening 29 youth, 43 higher education professionals, and 52 nonprofit leaders from 18 states and 5 countries.

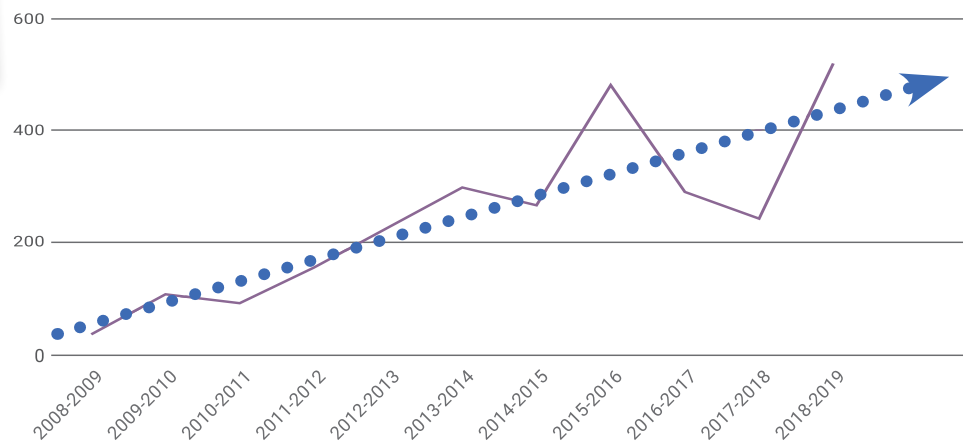
Awarded the New England Secondary School Consortium's **2016 VT Champion of Education**, nominated by the VT Agency of Education.

# Growing the UP Story



## A DECADE OF UP STUDENT LEADERS

UP for Learning has trained over 2,700 student leaders in the past decade, with a record 550 student leaders in 2018-19 alone!



“UP’s M3 initiative **changed the culture of our school.** Assignments become opportunities, not obligations; challenges are embraced, not avoided; and mistakes are viewed as steps to growth, not signs of failure.”

—M3 teacher advisor





## Communicating School Redesign

Youth-adult teams build support for school redesign.



## Getting to 'Y'

Young people become leaders in improving the health and wellness of their communities.



## M3: Mindset, Metacognition & Motivation

Youth master the ways brain-based strategies can drive their learning and share this knowledge with their peers and teachers. Concurrently, M3 teachers engage in professional development to hone their practice.

UP  
Initiatives:  
Opening  
Doors  
to youth as  
innovative  
leaders

## Personal Power & Purpose through Partnership

Youth build self-awareness, effective communication, and self-advocacy skills over the course of a school year.

## Youth & Adults Transforming Schools Together

Students and teachers join together to ensure that learning is engaging and effective for all students, and youth are agents of change.



## Transforming School Culture through Restorative Practices

Youth and adults weave restorative principles and practices into the fabric of their school culture.

## Cultivating Pathways to Sustainability

**A partnership with Shelburne Farms**

Youth and adults create year-long projects focused on pathways to building a socially, economically, and ecologically just society.

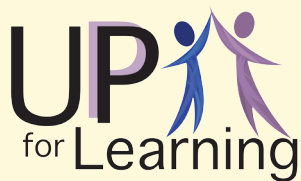
## Customized Programs & Support

Schools partner with UP for Learning to create opportunities to position youth as change agents in partnership with adults.



"Students who believe they have a voice in school are **seven times more likely to be academically motivated** than students who do not believe they have a voice in school."

—Russell Quaglia, Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations



Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning

**OUR MISSION** is to shift the youth-adult relationship at the heart of education to partnership and to increase youth agency. This ensures that all young people have opportunities, support, knowledge and skills to pursue active roles in their learning, their lives and their community.

**WE ENVISION** a time when all youth will take responsibility for their own learning by collaborating with adults in the educational system to reach their own goals.

#### VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Share Responsibility
- Start from Strengths
- Assume Positive Intentions
- Seek Equity & Justice
- Create Open Dialogue
- Employ Data to Drive Change

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

—principal and team member

## SUPPORTERS & COLLABORATORS



The support of **17** foundations and organizations since 2008 validates the value and potential of this work.

