

Communicating School Redesign

2020–21 Initiative

UP for Learning initiatives **will be happening** during the '20–'21 school year ... both in-person, remotely, or a combination of both. Regardless of the learning landscape, we can reimagine and transform education together!



Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning



"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

Working together physically or remotely, UP for Learning has the resources and experience to help youth and adults navigate our new educational environments to reimagine and transform the learning experience.

What is the opportunity?

Vermont has always been a national and international leader in education. The current implementation of Act 77: Flexible Pathways and movement toward proficiency-based learning demonstrate our commitment to personalize learning, and ensure strong schools and strong communities.

Ambitious policy implementation must be coupled with an ambitious communications approach to build public understanding and support for change. The Communicating School Redesign Initiative is designed to accomplish this — building understanding and support 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 message based on a research-based approach
- Creating opportunities for meaningful dialogue in school and community
- Engaging youth and adults as change agent partners

In addition to receiving training and ongoing coaching, each team will conduct research in order to shape its own local communications campaign. Teams will conduct a survey early in the year to take the pulse of their community on issues related to education and learning. Data from the survey will form the basis for their Action Research project. 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.

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. 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.**



"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*



Cost

Annual membership in the CSR Initiative is \$6,500 per school. In addition, professional development hours or graduate credits are required for at least two faculty in the team's first year.

UP provides two additional pathways for adults. In both cases, credit or hours are based on meeting the course goals:

- In partnership with Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU), an adult partner can earn 1 or 3 graduate credits for the course. This UP for Learning course costs \$683/\$2,049, which covers instruction, materials, and all fees associated with SNHU credits.
- If graduate credits are not a priority, adult partners can participate in the same course (for 15 or 45 professional learning hours) at the reduced cost of \$563/\$1,689.

UP encourages schools to offer youth members credit and/or evidence of proficiency in transferable skills toward graduation.

For more info, contact Harry Frank at harry@upforlearning.org.

CSR is an initiative of

UP for Learning

Empowering youth and adults to
reimagine & transform education *together*

UP for Learning works to:

- Ensure students **own their learning** and **participate actively** in school change,
- Create **engaging learning environments** where all students thrive,
- Elevate **youth personal power and purpose**, and
- Develop **leadership skills** and promote lifelong **civic engagement**.

"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 of Student Aspirations, 2014

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. In addition, we are an active contributor to national and international efforts to integrate student-centered practices in education.

"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."

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

Since 2008, UP has trained more than **3,000 student leaders** in **113 Vermont schools** through **379 programs**.

