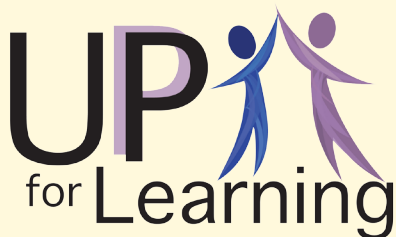


UP for Learning

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

2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT

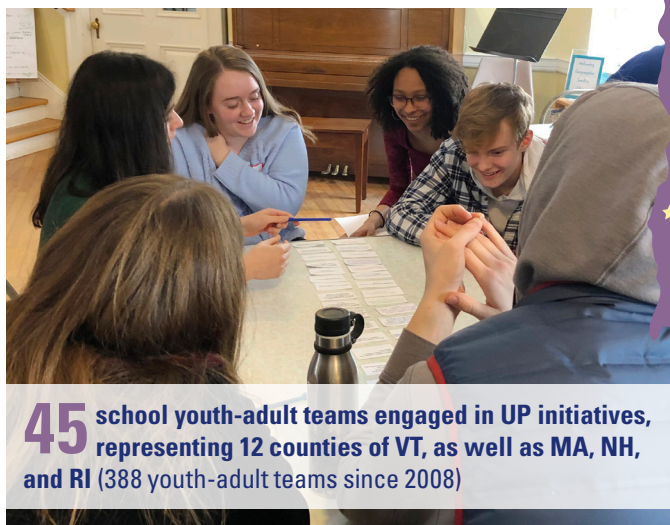
UP for Learning supports educational communities' work toward systemic transformation, engaging all learners, and increasing the authentic voice of youth in learning and decision-making. We believe all young people have the right to a meaningful and engaging education. In each of our seven primary programs and customized community projects we utilize research-based models that transform the student-teacher relationship to one of shared ownership and shared responsibility. UP offers facilitation, strategies, tools and ongoing coaching to ensure all young people have opportunities, support, knowledge and skills to pursue active roles in their learning, their lives and their community.



Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning



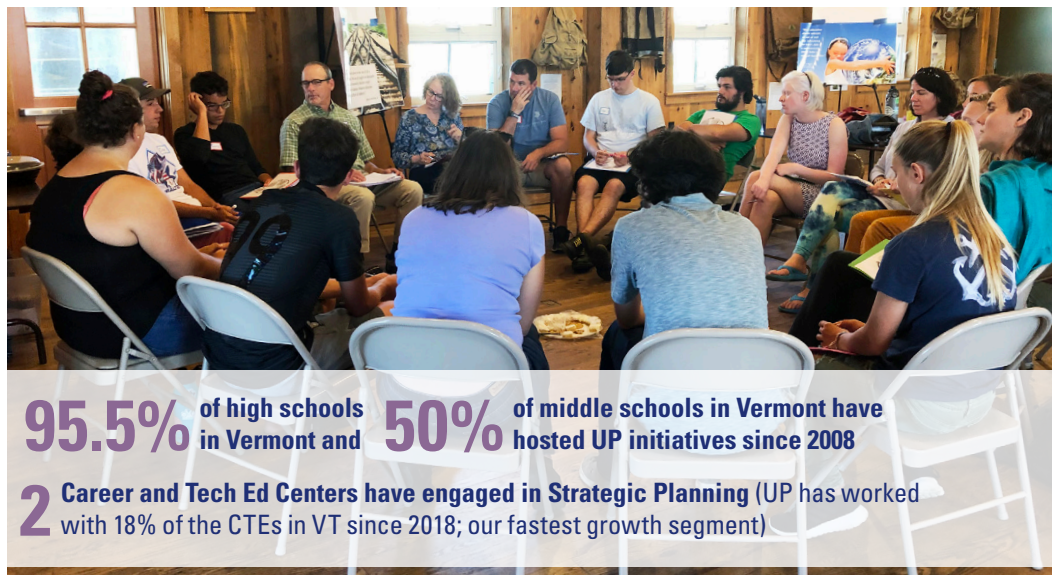
312 youth leaders participated in year-long initiatives with their adult partners (2,999 total youth leaders since 2008)



45 school youth-adult teams engaged in UP initiatives, representing 12 counties of VT, as well as MA, NH, and RI (388 youth-adult teams since 2008)



★ plus, schools in
Great Barrington, MA
Somersworth, NH
Rumford, RI



95.5% of high schools in Vermont and **50%** of middle schools in Vermont have hosted UP initiatives since 2008

2 Career and Tech Ed Centers have engaged in Strategic Planning (UP has worked with 18% of the CTEs in VT since 2018; our fastest growth segment)

Partnership creates ownership. Ownership sparks motivation. Motivation drives learning.

2019-20 Highlights

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL (YAC)

Youth have always been centered in leadership roles at UP for Learning. From their work as co-facilitators of our program orientations and training sessions to their role as co-designers and co-presenters at statewide and national conferences, to their advocacy on issues of health, safety and wellbeing in their school communities and in the statehouse, our youth partners have been agents of change shaping the culture of their schools and our state. Over the past year, UP created our new Youth Advisory Council where youth are setting the agenda, facilitating the conversation

and leading the follow-up work — all of which are contributing to and influencing the direction of our organization and our educational system. Youth serve directly as members of our Board of Directors, and as members and leaders of our program teams at their schools.



VERGENNES PLP ACTION TEAM

"It is exciting to know that I am a part of a group that is going to improve the PLP for so many students."

—Vergennes student and PLP action team member, 2020

Vergennes Union High School together with UP for Learning received funding from the Vermont Agency of Education to bring together a youth-adult team which carried out an action research project exploring the current status of personalized learning. The team researched the current use of Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and created a guide for other teams and individuals to use as they work to increase the relevance of the PLP. The work to make PLPs meaningful at VUHS was an exciting opportunity for students on the team who, like their peers, stood to benefit from increased personalization, rigor and connection to their learning. Similarly, teachers saw the work as an important opportunity to partner with their students and increase the relevance of their work and their students' learning. By working together, they shared the responsibility for crafting a process that would serve the whole school community, and the whole state of Vermont, as they work to make learning more meaningful going forward.

GTY Designation

In June of 2020, UP's Getting to 'Y' (GTY) initiative received national designation as a **Best Practice** by the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP). The Vermont Department of Health (VDH) also recognized GTY as an Evidence-based Practice. The AMCHP Review Panel, comprised of experts in public health and child and adolescent health, awards the Best Practice designation to programs "that have been extensively evaluated and proven effective". GTY is grounded in positive youth development and youth participatory action research theory. With strong adult partners, youth take the lead in analyzing local YRBS (Youth Risk Behavior Survey) data, identifying assets, and creating dialogue with peers and community members around root causes and solutions for their concerns. Through these steps, they develop concrete action plans to improve youth health and well-being in their school and community. By providing a framework for youth to have a meaningful role in their schools and communities, GTY increases individual youth participants' health literacy, knowledge, sense of self-efficacy, community engagement, and resilience and protective factors.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES: TRANSFORMING SCHOOL CULTURE

At Twin Valley Middle/High School (Whitingham), UP for Learning worked with a youth-adult team that explored restorative practices, with a focus on relationships and community building. As the team learned about and explored both restorative practices and youth agency, they began to identify hopes for their own educational experiences. They collected data, using a strengths based approach, from the larger community. One question they decided to explore is what stakeholders' aspirations are for their school. They mapped out action plans for how to reach the various stakeholders within their community and set out specific monthly goals to drive their action plan.

"Restorative justice practices changed my school experience for the better. Seeing the model for this practice, I believe that it could greatly decrease the amount of repeat offenses in students. I am wholeheartedly behind this project, and am excited to see it through."

—Student, Twin Valley restorative practices team

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS WITH CAREER CENTERS

At both River Bend Career and Technical Center (Bradford) and North Country Career Center (Newport), UP for Learning guided and supported a strategic planning process that, for the first time, included students. Beginning with an introduction to the concepts and practices of elevating youth voice, conducting Participatory Action Research and working together in a youth-adult partnership framework, the teams met regularly to guide an action research process. The results of the action research work will be recommendations to inform the strategic plan for the career center over the next 3-5 years.

"I have learned that youth voices are an essential role in future school adjustments. Taking a leadership role, and considering all opinions on a matter, helps to open my eyes to a bigger picture and step outside of my own mindset."

—Student, River Bend Youth-Adult Continuous Learning Team

Collective Impact Projects

"Our collaboration with UP for Learning has helped us take some important leaps in our understanding of and commitment to youth-adult partnership," says Chani Waterhouse, Director of Member Relations at the **Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence**. "After being trained by UP and working with their youth-adult facilitation team, it is hard to imagine ever again working on a youth-focused project without having youth at our side sharing in leadership and decision-making. Our work will be stronger and our outcomes will be bigger and better because of this shift."

UP and **Shelburne Farms** have partnered in a yearlong initiative titled Cultivating Pathways to Sustainability. Youth and adult teams use the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for community change projects.

UP and **Spectrum Youth and Family Services** are partnering with Winooski School District and the city of Winooski to create a youth-adult restorative justice team with a guiding question of: How can we make Winooski a beloved community by integrating restorative justice?

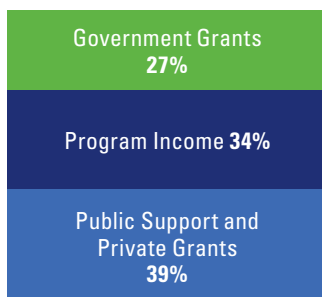


RESPONSE TO COVID-19 AND REMOTE LEARNING

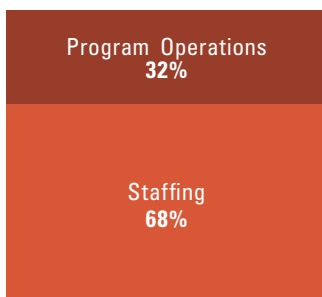
When the pandemic hit, UP quickly pivoted and responded to the needs of our youth-adult teams. Through distance platforms, UP for Learning met regularly with our school and community teams to support them with a variety of resources based on the need for youth to feel connected to their teachers and peers. In response to COVID-19 and the mandate to go to distance learning, UP's Youth Advisory Council created a survey to connect youth across Vermont. This survey inquired into the everyday struggles and aspirations of youth.



INCOME



EXPENSES



UP's Commitment to Anti-Racism

UP is striving to be actively anti-racist in our work as an organization, and in our lives as the youth and adults who form our organization. UP Faculty, Board of Directors, and Youth Advisory Council members meet regularly to check in about how we are holding ourselves accountable, educating ourselves and taking action to combat systemic racism. In these conversations, we repeatedly return to the importance of listening to the voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). White communities cannot continue to form opinions about what is going on without hearing BIPOC voices. It is the responsibility of the rest of us right now to stop, listen, learn and then act in solidarity. With our BIPOC community members, we stand in solidarity. We commit to doing the work to fight for liberation. We commit to continuing to deepen and strengthen our organization's anti-racist policies and practices as we work towards educational equity and justice for communities throughout Vermont.



"I am excited most about the potential that this work has to transformatively change the culture at our school... this work helps change our collective mindset."

—UP adult participant

Economic Equity and Accessibility

We are committed to ensuring affordable access to our programs, and prioritizing our work with our most economically challenged and underserved schools. UP for Learning is committed to systemic social justice and closing the opportunity gap - ensuring that all schools have access to UP's work regardless of their ability to pay.

Core Values and Beliefs

Our fundamental value is to **SEEK EQUITY & JUSTICE**

We believe that **educational equity is a human right**. All young people have the right to a meaningful and engaging education. **In order to pursue this aim, we are guided by these principles and values...**

SHARE RESPONSIBILITY

Learning and change must be transparent and must be driven by adults and youth as equal partners.

START FROM STRENGTHS

Youth and adults have the wisdom and capacity to orchestrate change. Beginning with what's working provides hope and energizes a community to embrace change.

SEEK EQUITY & JUSTICE

CREATE OPEN DIALOGUE

Deep conversation is central to changing school cultures. When systems are designed for youth to be engaged as full partners with equal value, the work of school transformation can occur by creating a shared vision for education and the learning process.

EMPLOY DATA TO DRIVE CHANGE

Research is 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.