

# UP for Learning

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

## Empowering youth to create, innovate, and lead

*We believe that every young person should...*



**BE KNOWN  
AND VALUED**



**HAVE A SENSE  
OF PURPOSE**



**HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY  
AND ABILITY TO SHAPE  
THEIR OWN LIVES AND  
THE LIVES OF OTHERS**

“When students have a say,  
**they feel like they matter**, and  
what could possibly be more  
important than that for a  
student?”

—high school student,  
*Communicating School Redesign*

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

—middle school student, M3

“School district and  
community visioning is time-  
consuming and arduous  
work; however, in working  
with UP, **every member walks  
away equipped with the tools  
necessary to engage and inspire  
others** toward a common goal.”

—Amy Rex, Milton Town School District  
superintendent

**PHOTOS:** Left, Youth & Adults Transforming Schools Together team shares a joyful break after a day of drafting their action plan. Center, Youth Advisory Council member Maryann Songhurst leads a discussion about youth-centered issues. Right, Grace Johnson, youth facilitator from U-32 High School, interviews Jonathan Carrigan of Bellows Falls Union High School at the High School GTY orientation.

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



**THE CHALLENGE:**  
Vermont is losing the potential of too many of our young people. A widening opportunity gap is limiting their options.

**HOW DO WE KNOW THIS?**



**2 out of 5**

**THEY ARE NOT VALUED** by their community.  
*(Students of color and LGBT students are significantly less likely to feel that they matter to their community.)*

Sources: Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, Search Institute Developmental Asset Survey, Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey



Only **61%** of students believe that **THEY HAVE A VOICE**

in their learning and their lives upon entering middle school.

This drops to **37%** by twelfth grade.



**Less than half**

of youth (44%) report a sense of **PERSONAL POWER.**

**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**

**SOLUTION:**

Ensure that every young person:

- Is **KNOWN AND VALUED** in their community
- Has a **SENSE OF PURPOSE**
- Has the ability to **SHAPE THEIR OWN LIVES**, and the **LIVES OF OTHERS**

**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.



**P4 Advisory: Personal Power & Purpose through Partnership**

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



**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.



**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.

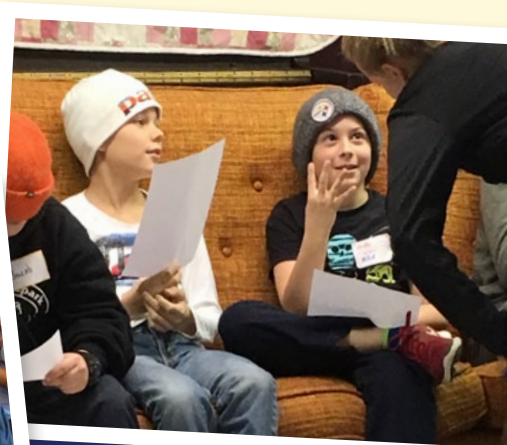


**Cultivating Pathways to Sustainability**

**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 partners with UP for Learning to create a wide variety of opportunities to position youth as change agents in partnership with adults.



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 and adults partnering together.**

—CSR principal and team member

"M3 changes the culture at our school. Assignments become opportunities, not obligation; challenges are embraced, not avoided; and **mistakes are viewed as steps to growth, not signs of failure.**"

— M3 teacher advisor



"I now know that education is a collaborative process between students and adults working together... I know that **meaningful action can be taken by anyone** and that it is an important part of democracy."

—CSR 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

# Celebrating 12 Years of Growth



Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning

## Core Values & 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.

### 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.

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.

YEAR 1	YEAR 12
<p>4 high school teams engaged in improving schools</p>	<p><b>388</b> high, middle and elementary school teams engaged in improving their schools &amp; communities</p>
<p>Served schools in 4 of 14 counties</p>	<p>Served schools in <b>14</b> of 14 counties</p>
<p>32 youth involved in changing their schools</p>	<p><b>3,000</b> empowered &amp; skilled youth leaders made a positive difference in their schools &amp; communities</p>
<p>1 school transformation program</p>	<p><b>8</b> youth-adult partnership programs transforming schools &amp; communities</p>
<p>0 graduate courses</p>	<p><b>11</b> accredited graduate classes supporting teachers in their role with youth as co-creators of change</p>
<p>1 faculty founder</p>	<p><b>7</b> experienced and passionate educational leaders</p>
<p>An operating budget of <b>\$60,000</b></p>	<p>An operating budget of over <b>\$600,000</b></p>

**WE ARE GRATEFUL** to the individuals, foundations, and organizations who have made our work possible over the past 12 years!

## SUPPORTERS & COLLABORATORS

*In collaboration with the following foundations and organizations, we are proud to ensure that all young people have opportunities, support, knowledge, and skills needed to pursue active roles in their learning, their lives, and their community.*



Montpelier, VT • [upforlearning.org](http://upforlearning.org) • (802) 552-8140 • [info@upforlearning.org](mailto:info@upforlearning.org)



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