Communicating School Redesign

2019–20 Initiative & Course

UP for Learning

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

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.

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 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.

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



"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





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.**

Cost

Cost per school is $3,500 plus professional development ($1,605) or graduate credit ($1,992) costs for at least two faculty.

For more information

Contact Harry Frank at harry@upforlearning.org or Helen Beattie at helen@upforlearning.org.

CSR is an initiative of

UP for Learning

A nonprofit organization amplifying the role of youth as partners & agents of change in education

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.

Since 2008, UP has trained more than **2,600 student leaders** in **113 Vermont schools** through **334 programs.**

"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