

Background on

Tarrant Institute for Innovative Education

www.tarrantinstitute.org

The Tarrant Institute for Innovative Education (TIIE) at the University of Vermont works to improve education for young adolescents by fostering student-centered, technology-rich learning in Vermont's middle grades. Teaming directly with school communities, the initiative helps to create 1-to-1 computing environments that allow students to use the latest digital tools to work at their own pace, gain ubiquitous access to the digital world outside of the classroom; collaborate with peers, and pursue projects based largely on their own interests.

TIIE's goals include 1) increasing middle school students' engagement through technology-rich learning designed for young adolescents; 2) increasing adolescents' likelihood of school completion; and 3) preparing students for citizenship by engaging them today as 21st century citizens. Toward these ends, TIIE employs a multi-faceted approach. Providing ongoing and embedded teacher professional development is a cornerstone; working with teams of teachers to ensure that learning in their classrooms is personalized, relevant, and active. TIIE also provides varying degrees of support for technology purchases to its partner schools.

TIIE was established in December, 2009 through a gift from the Richard E. and Deborah L. Tarrant Foundation. TIIE is directed by Dr. Penny Bishop, Professor of Education at the University of Vermont. She is joined in this work by Associate Director John Downes and staff members Susan Hennessey, Audrey Homan, and Meredith Swallow. Participating teams of teachers and students currently exist at Vermont schools such as Milton Middle School; Manchester Middle School; Peoples Academy Middle Level (Morrisville); Edmunds Middle School (Burlington); Woodstock Middle School; Essex Middle School; and Currier Memorial School (Danby).

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