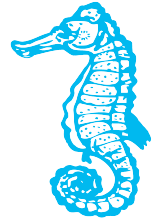




Winooski – Burlington Partnership for Change

www.partnershipforchangevt.org



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Burlington & Winooski: A Partnership for Change Creating Our Future Together, One Student at a Time

Why are we transforming our high schools?

Burlington & Winooski High Schools want to make sure that ALL our young people have what it takes to succeed in today's world. With support from a planning grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation (NMEF), Burlington and Winooski High Schools--together with community partners of Voices for Vermont's Children, Vermont Adult Learning, The Tarrant Institute for Innovative Education, Linking Learning to Life, and the Tarrant Foundation--have undertaken this work because:

- The world is rapidly changing and the educational system has not been able to keep pace.
- Preparing ALL students for their future requires different approaches than used in the past.
- Not all students are succeeding in our current educational system.
- Each student has unique strengths, interests, talents, and needs.
- The educational system was not designed to be flexible and customized to help every learner reach their potential and meet their future.

What goals and beliefs guide our work?

Teachers, student, parents and community members developed these goals:

- Students are actively engaged in learning and have meaningful voice and experiences.
- All students gain the skills they need to succeed.
- Teachers are valued and supported as professionals with substantial opportunities for growth and leadership. Teacher engagement and leadership is critical for our success.
- Families and community members have an effective voice and meaningful partnerships with schools.
- Access to technology is necessary to support creativity, flexibility, efficiency, and effectiveness in learning.

Vision: Each young person in Burlington and Winooski, Vermont will graduate from high school with the confidence, enthusiasm, skills, and knowledge to build a satisfying and sustainable future for themselves, their community, and their world.

Mission: We will transform Burlington and Winooski School Districts by establishing a student-centered learning system that enables each learner - especially New American and historically marginalized learners - to develop the skills, knowledge, and relationships necessary to become confident, motivated, and self-sufficient learners who are successful in college and careers and are engaged in their communities. We will draw upon the collective wisdom, courage, and compassion of learners, teachers, families, and community partners in supporting every learner to pursue excellence.

Generously supported by The Nellie Mae Education Foundation and The Richard E. & Deborah L Tarrant Foundation

Why Burlington & Winooski together?

- Similar needs in Burlington and Winooski brought the communities together
- Both high schools were looking at new ideas to make sure every student has a high-quality educational experience that prepares them for their future
- In 2011, Burlington and Winooski School Districts received grant funds from the Nellie Mae Foundation to support planning together.

How are we moving this work forward?

Our preliminary planning was supported by funds from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. On October 31st, the Burlington and Winooski Partnership for Change submitted a proposal to Nellie Mae requesting \$3.3 million in support over three years. The proposal describes the community's hopes and plans for high school transformation. With or without foundation resources, the schools have committed to doing this work. If we receive the Nellie Mae grant, the next three years should provide us with the resources to develop new learning opportunities that will help us to reach our goals.

The proposal describes how we will reach our goals. To summarize:

- A Steering Committee that includes a diverse group of teachers, administrators, parents, students and community leaders will help to oversee and advise the process. The steering committee is currently being developed with assistance from the United Way, teachers and community leaders in Burlington and Winooski.
- We will create new learning opportunities together. In the proposal, this concept is referred to as the "Transformation Academy." Teachers, students and families will be involved in exploring and designing new learning opportunities in five key areas:
 - Youth Leadership and Involvement
 - Family-School Partnership
 - Community-Based Learning Opportunities
 - Effective Team Practices (How Teachers and Students are grouped)
 - Personalized and Proficiency-Based Learning Plans (Proficiency meaning achieving a certain skill level or competency in a particular area)

It is expected that we will have the resources to free up five teachers or other professionals (two full-time/three half-time) to serve as team leaders. In the proposal, these are referred to as "fellowships." These fellows will be selected through an application process. Each fellow will develop an "Implementation Team" of students, parents, educator and community members that they will work with to research opportunities and gather input and design new learning opportunities in each of the areas above.

- A "Director of Transformation", reporting to the Executive Committee of the Steering Committee, will oversee the Partnership for Change and the Transformation Academy. The Director will oversee the Fellows and Implementation Teams. (Note: The Director is referred to as the "Dean" of the Transformation Academy in the grant proposal.)
- A "Project Manager", reporting to the Director, will oversee communications, logistics and project coordination.

What changes are planned for next year?

- A new “Year-End Studies” program (students select a topic they are interested in studying deeply on and off campus from new “mini courses” designed by teachers) at BHS and WHS.
- Fellows in each key area will be selected and teams of students, teachers, parents and community leaders will be created. These “implementation teams” will be formed in the areas mentioned above, of personalized and proficiency-based learning, effective instructional teaming, youth leadership, family-school partnerships, and community-based learning.
- Teaming or “academies” with new groupings of teachers and students will begin at BHS and WHS.
- Expanded and enhanced professional development for teachers, including participation in a graduate program, fellowships and summer institutes, will allow teachers to collaboratively plan and coordinate curriculum, apply best instructional practices, and provide learning interventions so that all students including English language learners and students in poverty achieve success.
- Director of Transformation and Project Manager, both full time positions, will be hired to provide oversight and work with teachers, students, parents, and community members in order to ensure the goals of the Nellie Mae grant are accomplished.
- Every student will have an internet capable device (such as a netbook, laptop or iPad), beginning in 9th grade and phased in over several years, if the budget passes, including matching funds for this part of the initiative.

What types of policies and supports are needed to reach our goals?

- District policy will drive proficiency-based learning (learning that ensures that all students are gaining critical skills), assessment (which measures that students have gained critical skills), and graduation (which signifies that students have gained critical skills).
- Policies will ensure that all learners benefit from an engaging and challenging learning environment and that increased school- and community-based supports are provided for all of our most vulnerable learners
- Positive transitions in and out of high school to support success for each student
- Infrastructure and policies to improve coordination between students, teachers, families, and community

Where to learn more:

We have launched a new website, www.partnershipforchangevt.org to provide updates on activities relating to high school transformation and the grant. You will find press coverage and releases there, position postings, notes from meetings, etc. Visit us soon and check back for more news and updates.

Nellie Mae Planning Grant Committee Members (2010-2011):

Amy Mellencamp, Principal, Burlington High School
Frank Gerdeman, Deputy Regional Manager, Vermont Adult Learning
Garang Deng, New American Specialist, Burlington/Winooski Partnership for Change
Jeanne Collins, Superintendent, Burlington School District
Julie Cadwallader-Staub, Grants Director, Burlington School District
Justin Brown, Principal, Winooski High School
Katherine Helm, Assistant Principal, Winooski School District
Kyle Dodson, Director, Center for Service and Civic Engagement at Champlain College
Lauren Curry, Executive Director, Richard E. and Deborah L. Tarrant Foundation
Linda Walsleben, Coordinator of ELL and Home-School Liaisons, Burlington School District
Mary Martineau, Superintendent, Winooski School District
Matthew Webb, Teacher, Winooski High School
Nicole Mace, Research Coordinator, Voices for Vermont's Children
Peter McConville, Teacher, Burlington High School
Rich Tulikangas, Executive Director, Linking Learning to Life
Dawn Moskowitz, Family-School Partnership Coordinator, Burlington School District
John Downes, Associate Director, Tarrant Institute for Innovative Education