The Vermont Field Guide *to* Educator Mentoring

THE TEACHER QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The Contributing Authors

Susan Boyer, *lead author*, works with the Teacher Quality Enhancement Program as the statewide coordinator for mentoring and colleague support. She is also the co-principal of Union Elementary School in Montpelier.

Edith Beatty directs the Teacher Quality Enhancement Program, and co-chairs the Vermont Commission on Educator Quality. She has also been a teacher, school administrator, school board member, professor, professional developer, program evaluator, and author.

Laurie Lawrence is the program coordinator for the Vermont World Class Teaching Project, which is part of the Teacher Quality Enhancement Program. She is a National Board certified teacher.

Lynn Murray has been a principal, a teacher at all grade levels, chair of Trinity College's Education Department, and a member of the research and development staff for Northeast and Northwest Regional Laboratories. She is currently working with the Teacher Quality Enhancement Program, and as a curriculum consultant for Orange North Supervisory union.

Carol Smith is a veteran middle grades teacher, recently retired after 25 years on the Alpha Team at Shelburne Community School, and a national consultant for the middle grades. She currently works for the Teacher Quality Enhancement Program as the northwest regional coordinator for the Teacher Quality Network.

Doug Wilhelm is a writer and editor in Rutland who has worked on many publication projects relating to education in Vermont, including the *Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities.*

Teacher Quality Enhancement
Statewide System for Educator Preparation & Professional Development

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A note on the icons:
These four small icons appear along the margins of this publication, to signal important aspects of the content:

Research

(see also Appendix B)

Law & Policy

(see also Appendix C)

Data

Outcomes

(see also all "Field Notes")

Foreword

BY EDITH BEATTY
Director,
Teacher Quality Enhancement Program

Michael Fullan teaches us that we can't mandate what matters. What matters most is more likely driven by heart, soul, urgency, sheer will, and relationship.

As we began to roll out our Vermont State Grant to Enhance Teacher Quality, we immediately learned several things. Among them:

- There is a regulatory side and a field side to the work, and a moat between the two;
- Our design to create new or support existing regional structures to sustain high-quality professional development was foreign, ambiguous, and seemingly content-free to prospective participants; and
- Mentoring — and on its heels, the notion of colleague support — is the vehicle and the content to bring life and purpose to the learning communities or regional collaboratives that we seek.

Mentoring thus became the centerpiece of the conversation, and the fulcrum to leverage a genuine rally for educator quality enhancement.

The need to recruit and retain many new teachers came earlier than expected to Vermont. Almost suddenly, the need to support professional educators during their first years on the job became urgent. Fortunately, Vermont's federally funded TQE grant has helped us to meet the high need for formal support to the field, and for human and fiscal resources.

Members of Vermont's Commission for Educator Quality clearly told us that the highest and most immediate need for state policymakers to address is mentoring, and also that the transition from induction to professional teaching licensure needs clearer definition.

All the while, support, training, and follow-up for mentoring

relationships has been growing and spreading in a number of Vermont communities, with all the energy of a good idea. In particularly high demand have been the Educational Testing Service's "Pathwise" programs, based on Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching,* and the National School Reform Faculty's Critical Friends Groups.

As teachers engage in mentoring and colleague-support relationships that are about improving professional practice, and focus on the essential outcome of improving students' work, the dialogue necessarily moves to other areas of high import: instruction, assessment, supervision, evaluation, whole faculty work to implement action plans, and so on.

As I visit, present to, and report to the various constituency groups about this work to enhance professional quality, I hear:

- Acknowledgement of the high need for mentoring, but a concern about how to pay for it. I hear such questions and comments as: "Mentoring seems like a good thing to do, but how can we afford to pay for extra teachers?" "How can we afford to take our best teachers out of the classroom?" "We only have one pie, and we can only slice it so many ways." "We need to make cuts, not add new programs!"
- Horror stories about "bad" implementation of past mentoring efforts (buddy systems, pairings in absence of compatibility, training or time).
- A cry for help: "How do we do it?"

We are most fortunate to have had Sue Boyer and her colleagues pool their collective and recent experiences with hundreds of teachers around the state over the past two and a half years, to create this highly needed resource for what we've all learned about mentoring and colleague support. What is mentoring – and what is it not? How much does it cost, and what does it really take to do it well? How do I find out about who has done this, what "brands" does it come in, how do I get help, who are some of these teachers that have gone ahead and become local trainers? Teachers, principals, and policymakers alike will want to read this *Vermont Field Guide to Educator Mentoring* and get to work!

Please let us know if and how this publication helps your work, and how we can continue to improve upon its content and use.

Introduction

BY SUSAN BOYER
Statewide Coordinator of Mentoring & Colleague Support
Teacher Quality Enhancement Program

A True Vermont Tale

Jamie was a promising new Vermont teacher who had graduated from an education program and completed an internship at one of the state's more progressive and prestigious schools. A mature teacher who was married with a family, Jamie had no trouble finding a job; but after that, things did not go so well.

Following a brief orientation, Jamie spent a crazy week rounding up resources, searching for enough texts and desks for 27 students. During the first weeks of class, students acted out and were difficult to control. Jamie could not cover the curriculum — couldn't even teach. Afraid to admit defeat or ask for help, Jamie soldiered on.

A few parents complained, and one or two fellow teachers said their new colleague needed help — but administrators were busy with the beginning of school. Jamie asked about receiving a mentor, and was told one would soon be assigned. But before September was over, Jamie grabbed a student in frustration. Ashamed and unsupported, Jamie quit teaching.

YOU CAN'T GET THERE FROM HERE

A 2001 survey by the Teacher Quality Enhancement program found that only six of Vermont's 62 school districts had in place a structured mentoring program that paired new teachers with experienced colleagues. A "structured" program is one that trains its mentors, and provides release time for mentoring pairs to observe and meet with one another. While some school districts provided new employees with an orientation program and others offered an informal "buddy" system, less than 10 percent were giving new educators — both teachers and administrators — the level of support they needed to succeed.

In recent years, Vermont districts and supervisory unions have begun to experience a high rate of turnover among teachers and

administrators. Census data collected by the Teacher Quality Network, which has helped us track hiring practices and teacher turnover, reveals the following statewide causes for concern:

- a high percentage of practitioners with a Level I teaching license, meaning in most cases that they have just one to two years of professional experience;
- administrators who are unprepared or unable to support new teachers;
- retention issues; and
- an increasing number of teachers who are working on state waivers, without the appropriate teaching license for their position.

Increasing numbers of Vermont's new teachers — new to the profession, or new to a content area — and new administrators are going unsupported in our schools.

Increasing numbers of Vermont's new teachers — new to the profession, or new to a content area — and new administrators are going unsupported in our schools.

A SUSTAINABLE SYSTEM

In 2001, the Champlain Valley Educational Consortium, which includes curriculum coordinators from 14 school districts or supervisory unions, formed a partnership with the Teacher Quality Network and the Vermont-NEA to investigate effective, research-based programs for mentoring and colleague support. Each agency was concerned by the increasing numbers of new educators — and all were aware of the Vermont School Quality Standard that says each school shall implement a mentoring system to provide high-quality mentor support to new professional staff.

In August 2001, this partnership sponsored a week of training for 56 experienced educators who were becoming mentors of new teachers for the 2001-02 school year. The following May, 28 of these newly trained mentors took an additional three-day training to become mentor trainers themselves. The ultimate goal was to create a sustainable system for training Vermont teacher-mentors, and for supporting the increasing numbers of new educators.

And so it began. During the summer of 2002, an Eisenhower Grant written and received through a collaboration among the Teacher Quality Enhancement program, the Vermont State Colleges, the University of Vermont, and the Vermont-NEA made possible three weeklong, regional summer trainings for close to 90 teacher leaders who were becoming mentors. In May

2003, 30 of these mentors are to be trained as trainers, and will return to their own districts to prepare new mentors.

Weeklong summer trainings for mentors have also been organized for the summer of 2003. No longer dependent on out-of-state consultants, these trainings are now led by our own Vermont state trainers who have honed and practiced their skills as mentors and facilitators. In these ways, we continue to build capacity within Vermont for a sustainable statewide system of mentoring.

This is but one story of the structured support that is developing for new educators in Vermont. Thankfully, there are many more. In this *Vermont Field Guide to Educator Mentoring*, we have attempted to capture and highlight the variety of effective and structured educator mentoring programs that are currently in place, both for new practitioners and for mutual support among experienced peers.

If you know of other initiatives we should feature, please contact the editors. Field guides always have second editions!

WHY A FIELD GUIDE?

In the spirit of Roger Tory Peterson and the Audubon Society, we have indeed designed this publication as a field guide — as a handy and, we hope, highly usable resource that can guide school administrators and teacher leaders as they think about designing structured mentoring programs. Much as a guide to spotting birds might point out key markings and coloring, these pages describe the features, shape, and arrangements that effective mentoring programs require. Interspersed among the text are profiles of mentoring and colleague support programs that are underway in Vermont, and are accessible as models or as sources of information and useful experience.

The book is divided into four sections:

I. Why? Making the case, based in current research, for why educator mentoring is so important;

II. What? Describing the elements of an effective mentoring program;

III. How? Telling how best to support mentoring programs, and to solve common problems such as funding and time; and finally,

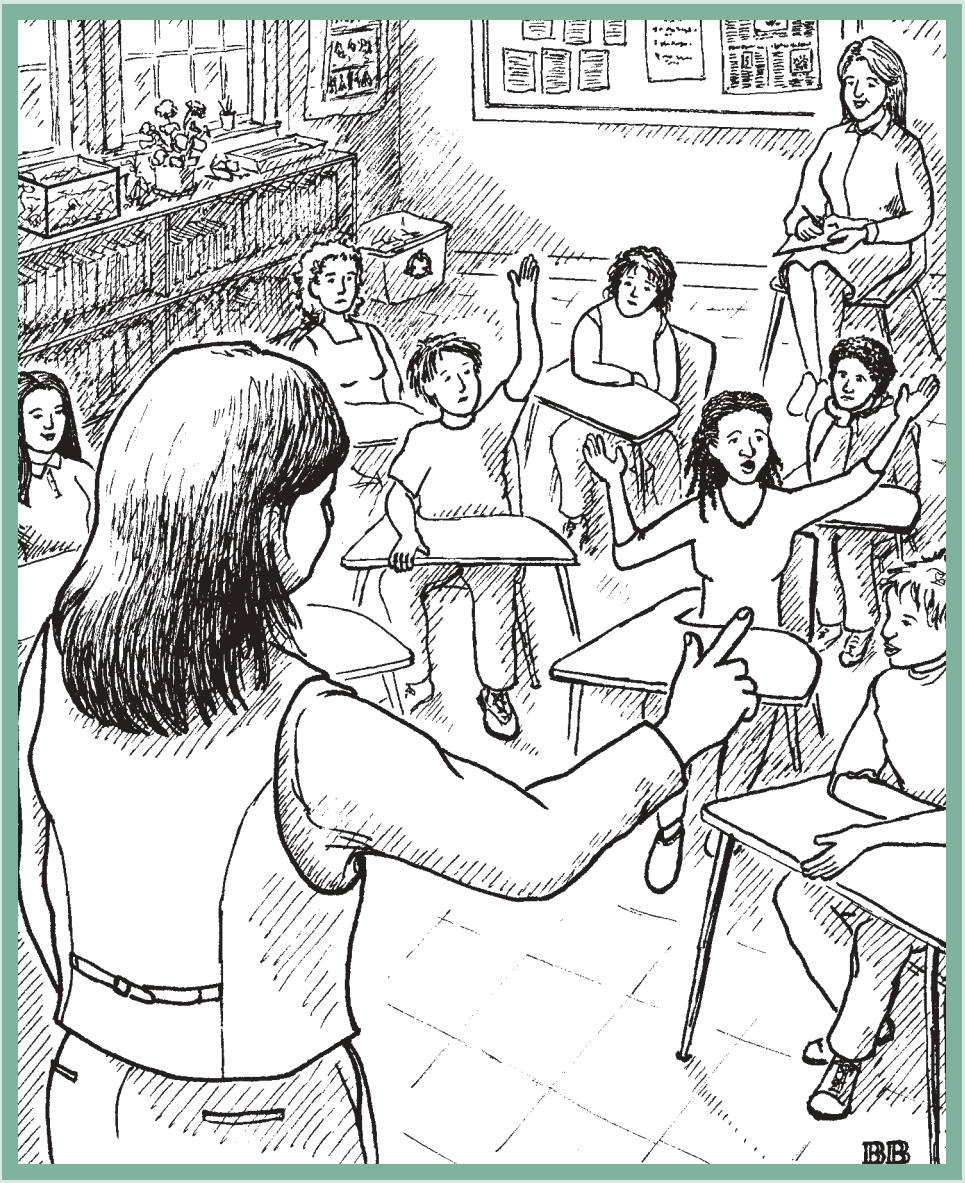
IV. Leadership Mentoring, on support programs for administrators.

Also, the appendices are full of useful resources — how to contact the right people to learn more, suggested readings, laws and policies on mentoring, and more.

Overall, in this Field Guide, it is the voices of our Vermont mentors, new educators, and mentor-trainers that are most powerful and instructive. Through their words, we can hear the frustrations of beginning educators; we can feel the excitement of mentors as they renew their love of teaching; and we can experience the power of collegial dialogue in enhancing our craft.

What the words and examples of these educators tell us, in combination with current research and school-wide outcomes, is that well-structured mentoring programs have the potential to change Vermont education in ways that can positively impact not only individual careers but whole systems.

This is, to put it simply, an idea whose time has come.



Why?

Research is showing that mentoring programs can be effective ways to reduce new teachers' feelings of isolation, improve teacher performance, increase new-teacher retention and satisfaction, and encourage openness and dialogue between teachers of all levels. (pp.12-13)

I. Why?

I remember when I first started teaching. It was so hard. I felt my college courses really hadn't prepared me for the road that lay ahead. Granted I took many methods courses, and felt okay there. What I wasn't prepared for was the behaviors that I would encounter. Now that I look back, had I had the knowledge, know-how, and support, my classroom environment would have been different. Having a mentor back then would have been helpful because I was frustrated with some of the children, and I was also unhappy with some of my teaching ... I needed someone to talk to, to help work out the "bugs" I wanted to change.

Lisa Curry, Franklin Central Supervisory Union

No Dream Denied, the 2003 report by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, says the rate of teacher turnover may now exceed that for all other occupations. Analyzing the most recent estimates from the National Center for Educational Statistics, NCTAF says about one-third of America's teachers are leaving the field sometime during their first three years of teaching. Almost half will have left after five years.

"Teaching is an occupation that loses many of its newly trained members very early in their careers," says national researcher Richard Ingersoll.

In Vermont, the situation is much the same. Drawing on data recently collected by the Teacher Quality Network in the northwest and southwest regions of the state, we can see a pattern of 10-15 percent staff turnover each year in the past three years in our schools.

Why? Teachers who have left jobs in schools give a variety of reasons: salary, workplace conditions, personal and family reasons, lack of parental support. But one of the most common reasons they cite is lack of support from the school and its leadership.

The TQN regional data suggest that 40-50 percent of those hired to fill turnover-created positions in Vermont schools each year are new teachers. Yet Johnson (2002) says the structure and culture of many schools do not seem to support new teachers in ways that would be most helpful to them. New teachers are

Nationwide, 85 percent of administrators believe that providing mentoring and ongoing support for new teachers is essential to retaining them.

often given the most challenging teaching assignments, and they work mostly in isolation from other teachers. In such a situation, new teachers have little opportunity to observe, and be observed by, experienced colleagues who could give them feedback and help them build strategies to improve their lesson planning, class management, and overall outcomes.

On the other hand, those teachers who felt most supported described their schools as having "integrated professional cultures" (Johnson, 2002), with characteristics like these:

- frequent and meaningful interaction among faculty members of all experience levels;
- higher expectations for increased teacher contribution to their school's learning community;
- curriculum guidance;
- collaborative lesson planning; and
- peer observation.

Many administrators are getting the message — and are realizing the power of educator mentoring in their schools, districts, and supervisory unions. Two recent national surveys of administrators found that:

- 85 percent believe that providing mentoring and ongoing support for new teachers is essential to retaining them; and
- 97 percent believe that requiring new teachers to spend much more time teaching in classrooms under the observation and guidance of experienced teachers will effectively improve teacher quality (*Public Agenda*, 2000).

MENTORING AND EDUCATOR QUALITY

Both research and public opinion — along with both Vermont and, now, federal law — concur that educator quality is essential for achieving desired learning outcomes. Studies confirm that in math and reading scores, the "strongest and most consistent predictor of a state's average student achievement level is the proportion of well-qualified teachers in the state" (Darling-Hammond, 1999). According to Harvard researcher Ron Ferguson, teacher quality accounts for 44 percent of overall impact on student learning in math (compared with family and home factors, 49 percent; and class size, 7 percent).

The Vermont School Quality Standards of Act 60 state in part that, by 2002, "Each school shall implement a mentoring system for professional staff in their first two years of employment with the school." Newly proposed licensing regulations also require that Level I educators receive mentoring support as one element of their qualification to gain a Level II educator's license. And with the 2001 passage of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, commonly called the No Child Left Behind Act, the nation has placed teacher quality at the forefront.

Investments in mentoring programs can not only reduce turnover, but can lead to many more long-term positive returns.

No Child Left Behind mandates that by the end of the 2005-2006 school year, all teachers in core academic subjects must be "highly qualified," and all paraprofessionals working in programs supported with Title I funds must meet the requirements to be "highly qualified" as well.

Title II of the law provides schools with the opportunity to receive grant funds to develop and implement initiatives:

- to promote retention of highly qualified teachers, including teacher mentoring by exemplary teachers, principals, and administrators;
- to develop induction and support programs for the first three years of service as teachers and principals; and
- to carry out teacher-advancement initiatives that promote professional growth and multiple career paths, such as those toward becoming a mentor teacher or an exemplary teacher.

COSTS VERSUS BENEFITS, SHORT- AND LONG-TERM

It usually costs something to create teacher mentoring programs — primarily because to become effective mentors, even the most experienced educators need training. Yet it can cost more to keep recruiting new teachers for high-turnover schools. And investments in mentoring programs can not only reduce turnover, but can lead to many more long-term positive returns.

The Center for Best Practices of the National Governors' Association suggests it is more cost-effective to fund new-teacher "induction," or orientation and support, programs than to continue funding recruitment and hiring initiatives to replace large numbers of departing teachers. A simple formula for calculating the cost of replacing a teacher, says the Center, is 25-35 percent of annual salary plus benefit costs.

"Funding a teacher induction program at a level of up to

$5,000 per teacher (1990 dollars) is more cost-effective than paying for programs to replace teachers who have left," the Center for Best Practices declares.

The costs of training new teacher mentors in Vermont are about $1,500 per person, including materials. Time for training may also need to be factored in. But as Vermont builds in-state capacity to train mentors, these costs will go down.

In California, investments in new teachers by the state's New Teacher Project saved money at both ends: by reducing recruitment and hiring costs, and by cutting down on teacher turnover. The project report concluded that initial costs of new-teacher induction programs would be paid back in a few years, while districts would continue to realize savings as those teachers continued to teach.

Research is also showing that mentoring programs, and other

FIELD NOTES

RUTLAND SOUTHWEST: A LEARNING PROCESS

"Two years ago our superintendent said, 'I want you to set up a teacher mentoring program.' I had no idea what that was going to look like," says Michelle Folger, curriculum coordinator for the Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union.

But Folger was well aware of how many promising new teachers were feeling isolated, growing discouraged, and leaving the profession.

"We need to be reaching new teachers and telling them where they are successful," she says. "New teachers need that feedback. They need that support."

The mentoring program at Rutland Southwest (which includes the Poultney, Middletown Springs, Ira, Tinmouth, and Wells districts) began in 2001-02 with a series of monthly meetings led by the curriculum coordinator for teachers new to the district, and those new to the profession.

"I typically want them to have a conversation about Vermont standards, learning opportunities, and classroom expectations," she explains. "I always ask them, 'What do you want? What do you need?' And we're always talking about what they find is successful." As a reference and resource, the group uses Harry and Rosemary Wong's book *How to Be an Effective Teacher: The First Day of School.*

Added to the program in its second year was a daylong, district-wide orientation for new teachers in August — and a new one-on-one mentoring component. The expansion was supported by a Teacher Quality Network grant.

"Where the Action Is"

At the orientation day, the superintendent, special education coordi-

forms of continuing colleague support, can be effective ways to reduce new teachers' feelings of isolation, improve teacher performance, increase new-teacher retention and satisfaction, and encourage openness and dialogue between teachers of all levels.

Benefits for new teachers

Studies show that beginning teachers who receive mentoring are more effective, focus on student learning much sooner, and are more likely to stay in the profession (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996). Mentoring helps new teachers learn to self-assess, and to direct their own professional growth. Through mentoring, new teachers are supported in taking risks that can improve their teaching performance.

nator, Folger, and others give a basic grounding in procedures and information that new teachers need. That's still followed by the monthly group meetings — but Folger and her superintendent knew, she says, that "there needed to be more. We needed something that was research-based.

"The ultimate is what's going on in the classroom. Helping teachers in their interactions with students: that's where the action is."

So Rutland Southwest used the grant funding and a modest allocation from its own continuing-education budget to send five experienced teachers to weeklong summer trainings in mentoring. Those new mentors were then matched with a total of seven new teachers.

To free up meeting time for the pairs, one principal spared a new teacher from educational-support team assignment for her first year. Another created a common weekly planning time. Folger also meets with all the mentors every other month. The mentoring pairs work together through Charlotte Danielson's "Pathwise" Framework Induction Program.

The next step, Folger concludes, is to train one of the mentors to train new mentors for the district in the future.

Overall, even with the structure of a formal program like Pathwise, Folger has found it's important to treat the first years of a mentoring program as a learning process — for everyone.

"The mentors want all the right information and the right answers right now, to help their mentees," she says. "I have to tell them: 'We're piloting this. We don't have all the answers. We're working to create what is best.'"

To learn more: *Contact Michelle Folger, curriculum coordinator, Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union, (802) 287-5286.*

Benefits for mentors

Educators who become mentors tend to become teacher-leaders within their schools, and to become more proactive. Working with new teachers often prompts mentors to reexamine their own craft. And in working with recently trained teachers, mentors themselves often learn new teaching strategies.

Benefits for students

New teachers who have been mentored use proven techniques more frequently. When educator mentor programs help new teachers gain critical new skills, students benefit in two major ways. First, enhanced teacher quality leads to greater student achievement. Second, when teachers are more effective in the classroom, they tend to stay longer in their positions; students benefit by not experiencing the "revolving door" of new teachers.

Benefits for schools

Along with improving teaching performance and increasing new-teacher retention and satisfaction, research confirms that mentoring and other forms of providing teachers with ongoing support result in increased collegiality among teachers at all levels (California New Teacher Project, 1992).

Some specific benefits reported by California's New Teacher Project included:

FIELD NOTES

BRATTLEBORO UNION H.S.: THE CYCLE OF REFLECTION

In fall 2001, Brattleboro Union High School English and journalism teacher Nancy A. Olson became co-coordinator of the school's mentoring program for new teachers. She had been a mentor in the program, which is about eight school years old.

She has since taken a mentoring course through the Teacher Knowledge Project (see p. 27), at the locally based School for International Training, where she had earlier taken a TKP course on teacher inquiry. And even though her program doesn't have the budget to formally train all its mentors, Olson's experience with the TKP has shaped and informed her own work with them.

"We have whole-group meetings every six weeks, after school, from 2:30 to 3:15," Olson says. That is still part of the teachers' paid day — and "one of the ways the school supports us is to allow us to do this within our required time." The same period is otherwise devoted to weekly one-on-one meetings of the mentoring pairs.

The coordinators encourage mentors to use the reflective cycle in their work with mentees: to find out what the new

1. *Improved teacher performance.*
   a. Teachers used a wider variety of teaching practices, along with more challenging activities.
   b. Student engagement improved.
   c. Teachers spent more time planning, and planned better instruction.
   d. Teachers used a wider range of materials.
   e. Teachers improved their ability to make decisions.
2. *Increased new-teacher retention and satisfaction.*
   a. Ninety-seven percent stayed in teaching after their first year.
   b. Eighty-four percent said they were very satisfied with teaching as a career (compared to 44 percent in a national study).
   c. Retention and satisfaction rates increased for minority and rural teachers.
3. *Positive impacts on experienced teachers and school collegiality.*
   a. Teachers reported greater cooperation and communication.
   b. Mentoring prompted reflection on teaching practice.
   c. Mentoring also prompted reexamination of teaching, and of roles in supporting new teachers.
   d. Collaboration stimulated professional growth.

teachers want to explore, ask questions to clarify the issues, do some hypothesizing, then work together to come up with choices on what to do next.

"We talk about it," Olson says of this cycle. "And in the whole-group meetings, we've started using it this year. Often, people have presented concerns — so we'll say, 'Which of these concerns would you like to explore today?' Then we'll use the reflective cycle to explore them."

The current coordinators have also begun selecting the mentoring pairs right away, instead of partway through the fall as before. Mentors and mentees now meet each other at a paid summer orientation day, which the program convenes shortly before school begins. Once the year starts, along with their weekly after-school sessions together, the pairs are free to meet and talk whenever they need to.

"Usually the demand is much higher earlier in the year, when people are more unsure," Olson says. "They're free to set up whatever works for them."

To learn more: *Contact Nancy Olson, Brattleboro Union High School, (802) 257-0356.*

e. Experienced teachers involved in mentoring became more proactive in their schools, and more often assumed leadership roles.

f. Experienced teachers gained new teaching strategies from working with new teachers.

Those are some of the strongest answers to the question of why Vermont schools and administrators may decide to invest in educator mentoring. The next section looks at "What" questions: what are the elements of success in a mentoring program, what types of programs are now being field-tested in Vermont, and what resources are available to help schools and districts get a program underway?

ASSESSING VERMONT'S NEED

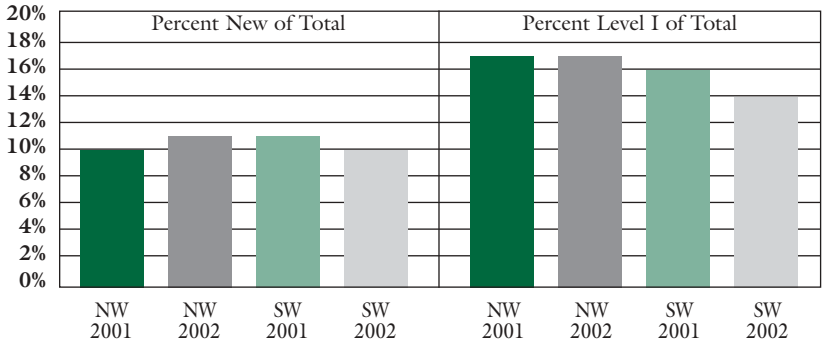
Do Vermont schools and incoming teachers share the need for educator mentoring? Recent data from the Teacher Quality Networks suggest they do.

Vermont teachers holding Level I licenses are, in most cases, those who have less than two years of classroom experience. Among newly hired Vermont teachers in 2001 through 2003, 40-50 percent held Level I licenses.

Data collected in fall 2001 and 2002 by TQN regional coordinators in the state's northwest and southwest regions —which can be taken to represent Vermont as a whole — found that a range of 14-17 percent of practicing teachers today are relatively inexperienced.

The northwest region (Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, and Addison counties) averaged 17 percent Level I teachers, and about 10 percent new teachers, among total teaching staff. (In addition, the average percentage of faculty expected to retire in 2003, in those schools, was 12 percent.) The southwest region averaged 15 percent Level I teachers, and 10 percent new teachers, among total staff.

Turnover Summary 2000-2003 Northwest and Southwest



What?

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, "Only 36 percent of beginning teachers who work with their mentor 'a few times a year' report substantial improvement in their professional skills; in contrast, 88 percent of those who worked with mentors at least once a week believe the relationship had a major benefit." (p.19)

II. What?

In *The Odyssey,* Mentor is a faithful friend to Ulysses and a teacher to his son, Telemachus. Twice in Homer's tale, the goddess Athena assumes Mentor's human form in order to give advice to his companions. In modern times, a mentor has come to mean a trusted advisor who is generally more experienced than his or her "mentee," and who takes a personal and/or professional interest in the mentee's learning and development.

A mentor has come to mean a trusted advisor who is generally more experienced than his or her "mentee," and who takes a personal and/or professional interest in the mentee's learning and development.

WHAT ARE THE BASIC FORMS OF MENTORING PROGRAMS?

The goals of any mentoring and colleague support program are the professional learning and retention of beginning teachers, along with professional and leadership development for their more experienced colleagues.

Generally, educator mentoring programs include one or both of these elements:

Mentoring for Beginning Teachers. Often called induction, this is a structured program to train, orient, assist, and support a teacher who is either new to the profession or new to the school. This guide focuses on the one-to-one mentoring relationships that pair a new teacher with a more experienced colleague. Induction programs may also include orientation days, and/or a series of workshops, for the whole group of new teachers in a school or district.

Colleague Support, or Peer Mentoring. This is for experienced educators who wish to better support each other in the effort to improve student learning. Overall, the purpose of a colleague support program is to develop an environment of sharing and collaboration that strengthens student learning, and enhances educators' expertise and satisfaction with their work.

WHAT ARE THE KEY PIECES OF PROGRAMS FOR NEW TEACHERS?

Effective mentoring programs for new teachers are much more than simple "buddy systems." Charlotte Danielson, a leading author and creator of the *Framework for Teaching* —

which is widely used to structure mentoring programs, along with evaluation and supervision systems and school reform efforts — writes that research suggests the following elements are needed pieces of a good induction program:

- A vision of good teaching: an agreed-upon definition of effective teaching that is grounded in the research and provides a common language, shared values, and assumptions around which to structure professional conversations.
- Adequate training for mentors, and an orientation for administrators.
- Activities that engage the beginning teacher in self-assessment, reflection on practice, and formative assessment.

Danielson also urges that a program be planned and organized; that mentors be compensated; that time be allotted for mentors and beginning teachers to meet and work together; and that the mentors receive support from the school.

Time is a critical part of effective new-teacher mentoring. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics: "The benefit of mentoring is linked to the amount of time that a mentor and a beginning teacher spend together ... only 36 percent of beginning teachers who work with their mentor 'a few times a year' report substantial improvements in their professional skills; in contrast, 88 percent of those who worked with mentors at least once a week believe the relationship had a major benefit."

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE COLLEAGUE SUPPORT PROGRAM?

High-quality colleague support and peer mentoring programs share these characteristics:

- They are integral, intentional, ongoing parts of the work of schools — made so through action plans, individual professional development plans, and connection to student needs.
- They help integrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effective teaching.
- They incorporate both theoretical and experiential knowledge.
- They provide flexible structures — for example, educator-to-educator coaching, study groups, critical friends groups, action research groups, cross-school collaborations, and discipline-based state and national online networks.
- They address varying needs over time and within specific contexts.
- They model a safe and civil environment for colleague support and mentoring, with attention to issues of equity.
- They are seen by participants as practical and manageable.
- They respond to participants' needs and developmental levels.

WHY NOT JUST A BUDDY SYSTEM?

Some schools choose to pair each new teacher with a veteran in an informal way, giving the new teacher someone to approach with questions and concerns. While this is helpful, it does not improve instruction or retain teachers in any proven, systematic way.

To support new teachers effectively, school leaders need to identify master teachers who have demonstrated accomplished practice (such as by achieving National Board certification), and train them in providing new teachers with responsive, ongoing, structured support.

In sum, effective mentoring programs are research-based and structured with purposeful activities. Conducted over time by an experienced educator who has been trained in mentoring skills, mentoring provides long-range, ongoing assistance that builds trust, is nurturing and supportive for a new teacher, and enhances learning outcomes for the remainder of that teacher's career.

FIELD NOTES

CRITICAL FRIENDS GROUPS: DIALOGUE WITHOUT HIERARCHY

In a growing number of Vermont school districts, Critical Friends Groups are bringing together teachers and, often, administrators for regular, structured, in-depth examination and discussions of student work, teaching practice, professional materials, and peer observations.

Unlike traditional mentoring, within Critical Friends "there's no hierarchy of expertise," says Edorah Frazer, who coordinates the groups in Addison and parts of Chittenden counties. "When people come into these groups, whether they're a first-year teacher or a 40-year teacher, they both stand to gain from this dialogue."

Critical Friends Groups are the centerpiece of the National School Reform Faculty Program, which has grown since 1995 to involve over 10,000 educators across the country. The program grew out of research into how teachers learn and improve their work.

The research found that teachers learn best not from external courses or charismatic presenters, says Frazer, but "from activities that engage them in dialogue, within their own building, drawing on their own expertise to help each other grow."

So the Critical Friends follow four protocols for structured conversation. Participants delve into student work, practitioner work (lesson plans, curricu-

WHAT ARE VERMONT'S REQUIREMENTS FOR MENTORING PROGRAMS?

Since September 1, 2002, Vermont's School Quality Standards have required mentoring for professional staff in their first two years of employment with a school (2120.4[b]). Pending approval of proposed revised licensing regulations in spring 2003, mentoring will also become a requirement for all teachers to move from Level I to Level II licensure. According to Vermont's draft School Quality Standards and policy, under development by the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators, full implementation of an effective mentoring program to support new professional staff must include:

- clearly articulated goals and expectations for the relationship that are focused on improved student learning;
- ongoing, research-based training for the mentors in areas essential for effective mentoring;
- a support structure that includes logistics, resources, tools, and dedicated time for the mentoring process;

lum guides, etc.), professional texts, and peer observations. The groups are led by coaches — and by January 2003, over 180 Vermont educators had been trained to play that role.

The "Tipping Point"

Vermont organizers have so far found that the most effective way to introduce the program is to bring together all district teachers and administrators for a half-day orientation in August, followed by a six-day coaches' training that is spread over the school year. The Critical Friends Groups meet at least monthly during the year, for two to three hours.

A big challenge, as always, is finding the time. Some schools free up meeting time during the day; others negotiate early release or late arrival for the meeting day. Other groups just meet after school.

Long-term benefits: "These skills, all these protocols, can be used schoolwide, in faculty meetings or strategic planning groups," Frazer says. "There's a 'tipping point,' in a school or district, at which this work engenders the development of professional learning communities schoolwide.

"So while there might be one or two Critical Friends Groups at work, when people take these skills and spread them throughout the school, the whole school becomes a Critical Friends Group, in a way."

To learn more: *Contact Edorah Frazer, (802) 425-4937, edorah@aol.com.*

- a monitoring process for continual assessment of the relationship and the mentor's skills; and
- a process for recognition and/or compensation of mentors.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD MENTOR?

A mentor program for new teachers can only succeed if its mentors are experienced teachers who have demonstrated high-quality instructional practice. As Paula Bevan reminds us, *All good teachers are not necessarily good mentors.* Becoming a good mentor takes training, practice, and certain attitudes, along with strong communication and interpersonal skills.

Approachability, integrity, and the ability to listen are the attributes rated by mentors themselves as the three most useful characteristics a good mentor can have. Here are more detailed sets of desirable qualities:

Attitudes

- Is committed to the profession.

FIELD NOTES

EAST MONTPELIER ELEMENTARY: LEARNING TO TALK TOGETHER

At East Montpelier Elementary School, National Board certified teacher Kathy Christy has developed and now coordinates a new-teacher mentoring program and a colleague support project that are both based in classroom observation and followup dialogue.

"The goal is to enhance the ability of all teachers in our building to support each other," Christy explains.

Christy trains teachers to mentor colleagues who are new to the profession or to the Washington Central Supervisory Union. At the start of the school year, mentors and mentees attend a reception luncheon; then the mentees receive support and consultation from their mentors throughout the year, while the mentors get support and consultation from Christy. Three dinner meetings for mentors and mentees during the year encourage networking.

Christy uses a variety of resources for the training, including information she has gathered from the Northeast Regional Lab on Mentoring, from ASCD on observation skills, and from Educational Testing Services' "Pathwise" on the *Framework for Teaching.*

"We're really trying to take an eclectic role in our district," Christy explains, "to build a multifaceted approach to mentoring that will create a sustainable program for the future. I try to build on the needs

- Is a reflective and analytical thinker, with good problem-solving abilities.
- Is an active, open, willing learner who embraces new ideas.
- Has a sense of humor.
- Is caring and responsive to the needs of others.

Communication Skills

- Listens attentively.
- Uses questions that prompt reflection and understanding.
- Maintains confidentiality and discretion.
- Offers positive and productive critiques.
- Uses time efficiently.

Professional Knowledge

- Has a wide repertoire of effective instructional and management strategies for working with diverse students in a variety of contexts.

of mentors and mentees, and not stick with one particular approach. Much like teaching kids!"

"The skills that people have learned through the mentoring process about collaborative dialogue and self-reflection have carried over into their own professional practice," says Principal Carol Randall. "My discussions with people on their professional growth plans this year have been very different from previous years."

For the observation project, Christy found an excellent substitute teacher who works with classroom teachers to plan lessons. The substitute then goes into the teacher's room for a half day, freeing the teacher to observe other classrooms and colleagues.

Because they have planned with the substitute, the teachers know their students are receiving quality instruction in their absence. Teachers now offer to go into each other's classes to observe their practice; they then talk in dialogue about teaching, based on what they've observed.

As a result of the initiative, "people are moving about our building differently," says Principal Randall. "They are in each other's classrooms before and after school. They are conducting meaningful discussions during their planning periods. It has enhanced the conversation in our school."

To learn more: *Contact Kathy Christy, East Montpelier Elementary School, (802) 223-7936.*

- Maintains a network of professional contacts.
- Collaborates well with teachers and administrators.
- Is willing to learn new teaching strategies from mentee.
- Has been successful in working with and teaching adults.

Interpersonal Skills

- Able to build a trusting professional relationship.
- Patient.
- Approachable.
- Easily establishes rapport with others.
- Attentive to sensitive political issues.

Mentors should model the qualities that their school desires in its teachers, and they must be willing and able to work in a sustained way with a beginning teacher. According to Gordon and Maxey in *How to Help Beginning Teachers Succeed*, mentors must bring to the relationship:

FIELD NOTES

CHITTENDEN SOUTH: "EYES ON THE PRIZE"

At Chittenden South Supervisory Union, Nancy Herman and Judy Carr of the Center for Curriculum Renewal (see p. 27) worked with teachers and the administrative team, beginning in fall 1999, to design and implement a mentor program. Three years later, nearly 100 teachers have been trained to mentor new teachers.

"Too often," notes Amy Waring, curriculum director, "mentoring relationships are short-lived, focusing only on the logistics of getting the year started, and then they fizzle. At the heart of CCR's approach to mentoring is a calendar of questions that mentors and new teachers use to structure and reflect on their work together month by month throughout the year."

To improve both their own and their mentees' teaching, during their training mentors study effective instructional practices and approaches to standards-based curriculum and assessment. They also examine their own styles of interaction, to be able to work effectively with new teachers whose styles may be similar or different; and they practice observing one another and giving feedback.

"I can use this material with first-year teachers and with team members I've been working with for years," one mentor commented in a program evaluation.

- a commitment to provide personal time and attention to a beginning teacher;
- personal and professional respect for those they are assisting, aiming to facilitate rather than control;
- trustworthiness, tact, flexibility, consistency, informality, a willingness to share information, a willingness to engage in active learning, and the ability to listen.

"Mentors do not supervise or evaluate new teachers. They should, however, support new teachers in understanding and using research-based resources to improve their teaching."

Amy Waring
Chittenden South S.U.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS FOR MENTORS?

Typically, mentors working with new teachers are expected to help them learn school procedures, give them moral and emotional support, be a sounding board for new ideas, and share their own knowledge about new materials, planning strategies, curriculum development, and teaching methods. Mentors may also help with classroom management; observe the new teacher in the classroom and offer non-judgmental feedback; and enable the new teacher to observe other classrooms and teachers at work. The mentor provides support as the mentee experiments with new ideas and strategies, and helps the new teacher self-

At followup group sessions three times during the year, mentors share issues, problem-solve, and offer recommendations to the administration. That feedback has helped clarify and refine policies and procedures of the mentoring program.

Chittenden South's program has the shared goals of attracting and retaining high-quality teachers, and supporting both teachers new to the profession and veteran teachers in new settings.

Also, says Amy Waring: "Nancy and Judy's work with our supervisory union has served as an integral component in our overall goal to continue to develop and maintain professional learning communities in our schools."

In the program's fourth year, administrators began working to tie together the mentor training, professional development, student data, and the supervision and evaluation system.

"Mentors do not supervise or evaluate new teachers," Waring cautions. "They should, however, be in a position to support the new teacher in understanding and using research-based resources to improve their teaching.

"It's important that we keep our eyes on the prize," she adds. "Our efforts should always be connected back to the students."

To learn more: *Contact Amy Waring, Chittenden South Supervisory Union, (802) 383-1213.*

"Using Danielson's Framework with a new teacher has provided us both with an opportunity to frame our dialogue about teaching using the language of the domains. This same language has shaped our conversations with team colleagues, making our team culture even more welcoming and inclusive for a new teacher."

Linda Keating, Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union

assess and reflect on his/her practice. The mentor may also be expected to help the new teacher understand the impacts and implications of student diversity on teaching and learning (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

WHAT MENTORING PROGRAMS ARE UNDERWAY IN VERMONT? WHAT MODELS, TRAININGS, AND SUPPORT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

In 2001, to learn the extent to which educator mentoring was being practiced in Vermont, Alice Charkes of the Teacher Quality Enhancement Program surveyed all 62 school districts. The responses showed that most mentoring-related efforts then involved unstructured programs, ranging from new-teacher orientations and buddy systems to occasional observations of new teachers, and/or conversations with them about student progress and the impacts of their teaching.

But since that survey, a number of school districts have begun projects that involve educator mentoring and/or colleague support programs, often with the support of the Teacher Quality Enhancement Program. These initiatives may feature mentoring for both new teachers and veterans; peer observation and coaching; local study groups; and networks for specific subject-matter areas. Some also involve teacher academies that provide ongoing seminars, and school-university partnerships that sponsor collaborative research.

Most successful mentoring programs are based on, or make use of, a research-based model or a resource for training, guided inquiry, and support. What follows are brief descriptions of the successful mentoring and colleague support programs, models, and training-and-support resources currently available to educators and administrators in Vermont. Contact information follows each synopsis.(Again, if we have missed your program, please let us know.)

1. The "Pathwise" Framework Induction Program

Based on Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, the "Pathwise" Framework Induction Program is a systematic process through which mentors and beginning teachers work together through a series of concrete, specific activities, sharing learning conversations that are built on the cycle of plan-teach-reflect-apply. Each activity is designed to help new teachers explore important aspects of teaching practice, and to relate them to their own classrooms.

A five-day training prepares mentors to help beginning teachers transition to classroom process. A further, three-day

training prepares experienced mentors to be in-district trainers of new mentors.

Contact: *Sue Boyer in Vermont, sueboyer@gmavt.net; or Carla Kenny at Educational Testing Services, 1-800-297-9051, ext. 3.; CKenny@mktgworks.com.*

2. The Center for Curriculum Renewal

Using materials and processes from their book *Shared Journey: Mentoring, Colleague Support, and Collaborative School Renewal*, education consultants Judy Carr and Nancy Herman work with schools and districts over time, providing training in mentoring and colleague support through a format that is tailored to participants' needs, and that provides useful strategies and tools.

The program includes a four-day training for mentor teachers, often spread over a semester or school year; a one-day training for administrators and lead teachers in mentoring programs; a two-to-three day training for experienced teachers who wish to support each other in improving student learning; and a summer session that prepares experienced mentors to be in-district trainers for mentoring and colleague support.

Contact: *Judy Carr, (802) 598-8292, jcarrvt@aol.com. Nancy Herman, 802 985-4057, vtherman@aol.com.*

3. The Teacher Knowledge Project

The School for International Training in Brattleboro offers seminars in which teachers learn to examine data from their classrooms through the lenses of their own and their colleagues' experience. Teacher educators who lead the seminars provide guidance, theoretical input, and readings from the field.

The Mentoring and Peer Support Seminar focuses on the skills of mentoring colleagues, whether new or experienced teachers: observation skills and techniques, pre- and post-observation conferencing, and reflective discussion using feedback.

Contact: *Kim Lier, (802) 258-3340, teacherknowledge@sit.edu.*

4. The Vermont Educator Quality Initiative/ National Board Certification

For mentoring and peer coaching, Vermont Educator Quality Initiative uses teachers who have achieved certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (National Board certified teachers, or NBCTs). NBCTs have demonstrated that they are accomplished teachers whose practice meets high

"What stands out for me about the mentoring I have done so far is the connection I have made with the teacher I am mentoring. I do not think it would have been as strong had I not done this [TKP] practice."

A 2000-02 Teacher Knowledge Project seminar participant

and rigorous standards, and who have expertise in instructional leadership, standards-based teaching, portfolio development, and reflective practice.

The Initiative offers:

- "Coaching for Reflection," a three-day summer training, with school-year followup, in the skills and techniques of coaching teachers (and students) to more reflective thinking;
- "Power of Reflection in Teaching," a 40-hour NBCT-facilitated course, meeting biweekly or monthly, that introduces teachers to the National Board standards and trains them in providing effective feedback using cognitive coaching skills and techniques; and
- "Reflective Teaching Practice and National Board Certification," a year-long course in which NBCTs support teachers who are candidates for National Board certification, and participants support each other with effective feedback on teaching practice.

Contact: *Laurie Lawrence at the World Class Teaching Project, (802) 747-0060, llawrence@vtworldclassteaching.org.*

5. Critical Friends Groups

The National School Reform Faculty (NSRF) focuses on supporting increased student achievement by developing collegial relationships, encouraging reflective practice, and rethinking school leadership. At the heart of the NSRF program is the Critical Friends Group. CFGs include six to 10 teachers and administrators who commit to working together on a long-term effort to improve student learning — and who, in this process, model and experience the building of a professional learning community.

"Critical Friends" gather for at least one two-to-three-hour meeting each month, during the school day, and also observe each other at work. Together they set learning goals for students, help each other think about improved teaching practices, examine curriculum and student work, offer each other useful feedback, and identify school-culture issues that affect student achievement. The program includes a five-day seminar, where experienced CFG coaches and professional-development experts work with new coaches.

Contact: *Edorah Frazer, (802) 425-4937, edorah@aol.com. Martha Rich, martha.rich@thet.net.*

6. The Courage to Teach

In the mid-1990s, Parker J. Palmer, author of *The Courage to Teach*, created "teacher formation," a unique approach to professional and personal renewal for educators that is rooted in the belief that good teaching flows from the identity and integrity of the teacher. The formation process invites educators to reclaim their personal commitment to teaching, and to connect the nurturing of the teacher's spirit to the revitalizing of public education.

In Courage to Teach retreats, participants in large groups, small groups, and solitary settings explore concepts of teacher formation and "the heart of a teacher" through personal stories, reflections on classroom practice, and insights from poets, storytellers, and prophets from various wisdom traditions. The focus is on clarifying the identity and integrity of the teacher, and exploring how the teacher's inner life connects with his or her professional role and responsibilities.

"The Courage to Teach has enabled me to be a better listener for my students. After a retreat, I am so much more present in the classroom."

A middle-grades teacher

Contact: *The Center for Teacher Formation: www.teacherformation.org. Ken Bergstrom, (802) 244-6332, kberg22@aol.com. David Leo-Nyquist, (802) 985-3765, leonyquist@netscape.net.*

7. The Northern New England Co-Mentoring Network (NNECN)

Established with funding from the National Science Foundation, NNECN is a collaboration between Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. This unique tristate program addresses the critical need to support and retain qualified middle and high school mathematics and science teachers, while building strong teacher leadership in northern New England.

NNECN uses the Pathwise induction program. Teachers that apply for this opportunity will receive a stipend and considerable professional development.

Contact for Vermont: *Jean McKenny, Vermont Institutes, jmckenny@together.net, (802) 766-8895*

How?

In general, mentoring is less about content and grade level than about concerns common to all teachers: planning and preparation, classroom organization and management, strategies of instruction and assessment, and reflection on practice. (p. 33)

III. How?

Training mentors is one of the most powerful forms of professional development I have taken part in. Not only do I feel that I am doing my part to help retain new teachers, but I also find myself being reflective about my own practice. I have brought the practices from the mentor training into my own school's professional development throughout the school year, which has impacted everyone's practice.

Pam Foust, state mentoring trainer

HOW CAN WE RECOGNIZE A GOOD TRAINING PROGRAM?

Even the teachers who are best-suited to become excellent mentors need to identify and develop certain complex skills that require purposeful training and practice. For this reason, a good mentoring program is essential.

The brief summaries that ended the preceding section described the various mentor training and support programs that are now available to educators, administrators, and schools in Vermont.

In general, Charlotte Danielson advises that an effective mentor training should build:

- **coaching skills** — using questions to lead the new teacher to his/her own understanding.
- **evidence collection and formative assessment** — learning to collect and provide facts from observation, without making judgment or offering opinion.
- **decision-making** — knowing when to offer directive, collaborative, and non-directive support.
- **a deep understanding** of the definition of good teaching.
- **reflection** — learning to ask the sorts of questions that produce true reflection in the beginning teacher.

Other training outlines for mentors often include observation and conferencing skills, reflective practice, building collegial relationships, and strategies to improve teaching in key educational domains: planning, instruction, classroom management, curriculum, and assessment.

The format of a typical training program includes three elements:

- **Initial training.** This may take three to five days, depending on the program. It may be offered as a weeklong summer course.
- **Ongoing support for mentors.** This usually comes through follow-up sessions. Mentors need time to talk to each other and compare notes on process, successes, and challenges. They may also need or want continued professional development around observation skills, evidence collecting, conferencing, or other needed skills.
- **Program evaluation.** Defining an assessment or evaluation process for a mentoring program will help in improving it for future years. Mentors and mentees play a role in this evaluation.

FIELD NOTES

ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL: STRUCTURE AND PRACTICE

Essex High School's mentoring program is set up so that each new teacher in the building — in 2001-02, there were 12 — has a mentor, preferably from the same department. The program's year begins with a potluck barbecue at an administrator's home in August, followed by a full inservice/orientation day for both new teachers and mentors.

"The day includes breakfast and ice-breakers, a welcome from the superintendent and principal, a tour of the building, a review of the student/teacher handbook, and some management scenarios," says program coordinator Ellen Emery. "We also address some 'hot topics' in the school and community." Teachers share lunch, hear from local union representatives, receive their computer accounts "and, by the end of the day," Emery says, "hopefully have a better understanding about the overall workings of the school."

Attending a Pathwise summer training for mentors (see p. 26) in 2001, Emery learned that a training component is crucial to a mentoring program. So the school contracted for a one-credit course from the Teacher Knowledge Project of the School for International Training in Brattleboro (see p. 27).

"We met with two instructors during

How do we match mentors and mentees?

Participation as a mentor should be voluntary, and if at all possible, the mentor and mentee should be teaching in the same school. Time for meeting and observation is also key.

In general, mentoring a new teacher is less about content and grade level than about concerns common to all teachers: planning and preparation, classroom organization and management, strategies of instruction and assessment, and reflection on practice. If they share a common and clear understanding of what good teaching in these areas looks like, a mentor and a mentee with dissimilar teaching assignments can work together successfully.

How are mentors supposed to work with new-teacher mentees?

The relationship between a mentor and a new-teacher mentee is one of collegial support — not of supervision and evaluation. This is critical, as building trust in this relationship is key to its success.

The mentor's feedback should be formative, not evaluative. It

two half-day meetings and four after-school meetings, to work on conferencing with mentors using the reflective process to allow new teachers to become their own best teacher without telling them how to be," Emery says. "Unfortunately, the TKP approach is not very structured, with clearly outlined goals, expectations, and outcomes for mentors. The Pathwise approach, on the other hand, is overly structured.

"I have taken components from both programs this year," she continues. "Because the Pathwise approach is much more structured, and because we are using the Danielson Framework as part of our new supervision and evaluation model, the Pathwise materials and ideas have been very useful.

"We have met as mentors during our after-school seminars, and as a bigger group of mentors and mentees and special guests during four three-hour school-day meetings, as well as two inservice days. At these meetings we address upcoming events, nuts and bolts issues, best-teaching practices, and we do some reflective work.

"We do a lot of interactive work and conferencing with colleagues during these meetings, to discuss and practice the skills we agree are best teaching practices, using the four Framework domains," Emery adds.

To learn more: *Contact Ellen Emery, Essex High School, (802) 879-7121.*

must belong to the mentee, and not be used for other (such as evaluative) purposes. Developing this relationship of trust supports two key goals of a mentoring program: improving teacher performance and promoting the new teacher's professional and personal well-being.

Specifically, mentors are typically expected to:

- Help new teachers learn school procedures.
- Offer support and be a sounding board for ideas.
- Share their own knowledge about new materials, planning strategies, curriculum development, and teaching methods.
- Assist with classroom management and discipline.
- Provide access to other classrooms, so new teachers can observe other colleagues and learn more about the different models and styles of teaching being practiced in the school.
- Help new teachers understand the implications of student diversity for teaching and learning.

FIELD NOTES

NORTHEAST KINGDOM SCHOOLS: MOVING PRACTICE FORWARD

During the 2001-02 school year, veteran elementary school teacher Martha Dubuque took a leave to work with the Northeast Kingdom School Development Center (see p. 43), a regional collaborative based at Lyndon State College.

Dubuque had previously hosted student teachers in her classroom at Hardwick Elementary School, and had been an adjunct faculty member in Johnson State's teacher-preparation program. At the School Development Center, one of her challenges was to start up and coordinate a new-teacher mentoring program involving 13 area schools, and 38 mentor-mentee teams.

"Number one, it was mentee-driven," says Dubuque, who is now principal of the Walden School. "The mentees developed the goals, and the conversation and the resources that the mentors brought were based on the mentees' agenda.

"That meant the mentees had full ownership. They were directing where it was going, they were deciding what they needed. I think that direction is really the key."

Dubuque designed and provided training to mentors in effective listening, in encouraging mentees to talk about their hopes and fears, and in analyzing from those conversations what the mentees' goals might be. She also

- Engage new teachers in self-assessment and reflection on their own practice.
- Provide support and professional feedback as new teachers experiment with ideas and strategies. (Danielson & McGreal, 2000)

Administrative support is vital to building and sustaining a strong, effective mentoring program.

HOW SHOULD WE SUPPORT A MENTORING PROGRAM ONCE IT IS ESTABLISHED?

Informed administrative support is critical.

Administrative support is vital to building and sustaining a strong, effective mentoring program. Administrators must have a commitment to the program and an understanding of the demands the process will make on both mentors and mentees. That's why an orientation for administrators is a common piece of mentor training programs.

"The commitment of the district to supporting [mentoring] has proven to be a strong factor in the success I am feeling as a mentor, and also the growth I am seeing in beginning teachers," helped them find connections to useful resources.

"We talked about different ways they could support mentees, whether it was doing an observation, peer coaching, partnering up to go to a seminar — all kinds of things," Dubuque says. "But the bottom line continued to be that it was the mentee driving the program."

The pairs were creative in finding time; and it was key, she notes, that building principals helped in that. Dubuque visited each school once a month, to sit down with the mentors and sometimes also the mentees. "We did a mini-training session, mostly around communication and goal-setting. They told me how I could support them from one month to the next."

With a new program, she concludes, "you need to start really slowly, and make sure it's manageable for the mentor and mentees. Help mentees to set reasonable, realistic goals — because the tendency is to try to fix everything all at once."

The program was built on a reflective model, with time built in for intentional conversation around goal-setting, analyzing what's working and what isn't.

"The reflection piece I think is sorely missing from what we do as educators," Dubuque reflects. "It's really the crux of how we move our professional practice forward."

To learn more:
Contact Martha Dubuque, Walden School, (802) 563-3000.

said a Vermont mentor trained in the Pathwise program.

Creating sufficient time is most important.

Various mentoring models agree that regular meetings between mentor and mentee are necessary, and that the relationship should continue for at least one year, and perhaps as long as three. Again, the National Center for Educational Statistics says that only 36 percent of new teachers who work with a mentor "a few times a year" report significant improvements in their skills, while 88 percent of those who worked with mentors at least once a week "believe the relationship had a major benefit."

The mentoring process should include release time for both mentors and mentees, to allow for meeting time, observation time, post-observation conferencing, and reflection. Pathwise and other programs suggest three to four hours per month, 30-40 total hours per year.

Mentors also need planning time, to create appropriate feedback for the mentee. This can be provided through an extra planning period, and/or release time for writing up observations.

In finding the time, creativity can help!

Differentiated teaching assignments for mentors and/or mentees may help solve the time problem. For example,

FIELD NOTES

BLUE MOUNTAIN UNION: SHARING THE NBPTS QUEST

Nancy Perkins and Jennifer Dube, both National Board certified teachers from Blue Mountain Union School, have been encouraging and supporting their colleagues in pursuing advanced certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Both teachers first applied for NBPTS certification in 1998-1999. By persevering and supporting each other, they both achieved certification on their second try. Perkins and Dube have since encouraged four other teachers at Blue Mountain to pursue NBPTS certification as well: two in 2001-2002, and two more in 2002-2003.

One of those teacher candidates, Allyson Coburn, says she might not have taken on the challenge had Perkins "not been cajoling and pushing me and guiding me all the way through. I'm glad she did."

Perkins and Dube have also been supporting a cohort group of NBPTS candidates that includes teacher candidates from Blue Mountain and from other schools outside the district — St. Johnsbury Academy, Bradford Elementary, and Newbury Elementary.

Observes Carol Curtis, principal of

mentoring can be considered an assignment, to go along with a reduced class load. Mentors and mentees may also be released from other school or committee obligations.

Research suggests that new teachers not be placed on school committees, but instead use their first one to three years to focus on improving their practice. (In fact, research suggests that new teachers not carry a full teaching load at all.) (Darling-Hammond, 1996)

National best practices for addressing the time issues in mentoring include:

- releasing mentors and mentees from non-instructional duties.
- scheduling common preparation time for mentoring pairs.
- providing time for mentors and mentees to team-teach.
- drawing on other school staff and administrators to act as roving substitutes.
- using faculty from institutions of higher education, and central-office professional development staff, as substitutes. (The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands, 1994)

Blue Mountain: "I think what speaks loudly for me is the number of people [at Blue Mountain] that are interested in becoming Board-certified. It's a rigorous and demanding process — yet Nancy makes them think that they can do it, and guides them through it so that each group that steps forward is successful."

The cohort group meets monthly at Blue Mountain, and connects with other groups of candidates over the Vermont Interactive Learning Network (ILN) as part of the "Reflective Teaching Practice and National Board Certification" course offered through the Vermont World Class Teaching Project. The group also shares student work, videos of classroom instruction, and written commentaries that give each other feedback and support.

Says Nancy Perkins: "I do feel it is my personal and professional responsibility to work with, encourage, and support other teachers to realize their potential, to take their teaching to the next level, and thus more positively impact the learning of their students. I try to guide them through the rough places, and I love to celebrate their successes with them."

To learn more: *Contact Nancy Perkins at Blue Mountain Union School, (802) 757-2711.*

HOW MUCH WILL A MENTORING PROGRAM COST?

The cost of training a new mentor in Vermont is about $1,500, including materials. Time for the training may also need to be factored in. Keep in mind, too, that each of these one-time investments should bring long-term returns.

As Vermont builds capacity for mentors and mentor trainers, training costs will go down. For example, Vermont now has eight Pathwise trainers, who are available to train mentors statewide. Regional collaboratives can greatly facilitate the offering and managing of such training, to increase cost-efficiency and strengthen cohort groups. (For one such example, please see the description, in the Introduction, of how the Champlain Valley Educational Consortium made mentoring happen in its region of Vermont.)

Additional costs will attach to releasing mentors and mentees for classroom observations and conferences. This may require hiring substitutes, or working out some other flexible staffing

FIELD NOTES

CHITTENDEN EAST: TRAINING THE TRAINERS

Like many school districts across Vermont and the nation, Chittenden East Supervisory Union expects to lose a significant number of its teachers in the coming years. Thirty-five percent of CESU's current staff is 50 or more years old. Wanting to not only retain new teachers but also to help them succeed, Chittenden East started a pilot mentoring project in July 2001.

Sherry Gile, a veteran teacher at Jericho Elementary School, was one of the four original mentors. The four attended a weeklong summer training as mentors in the Pathwise program; then, midway through the 2001-02, they attended a three-day program to become trainers. The next summer they trained 15 new mentors drawn from around the supervisory union.

Midway through her second year in a mentor-mentee relationship, Gile says: "I really can start now to see the impact. One of the huge pieces is that you build up a tremendous trust relationship. They see it as nonthreatening, because we aren't the official evaluator of their performance.

"We don't have enough data to know if we will retain those teachers," she adds — "but what is it doing in the meantime? I believe it's letting teachers practice reflection in their work. It's also

patterns (see previous section).

Here are examples of how some districts in northwest Vermont budgeted in 2002-03 to compensate and provide release time for mentors:

- **Chittenden South:** $1,400, plus release time for training.
- **Chittenden East:** 6% of base salary for mentors, 2% of base salary for mentees.
- **Franklin Central:** New teacher mentors: $1,000, Title II-funded. Peer support mentors: $500, Title II-funded.
- **Franklin Northeast:** $1,000 plus release time; funded through Titles I and IIA, plus grants.
- **Franklin Northwest:** $1,000 plus release time as needed, with Vt. ASCD membership, mileage. Title IIA-funded.
- **Franklin West:** $20/hr. for teacher leaders, Title II-funded.
- **South Burlington:** release time plus stipend, Title V-funded.

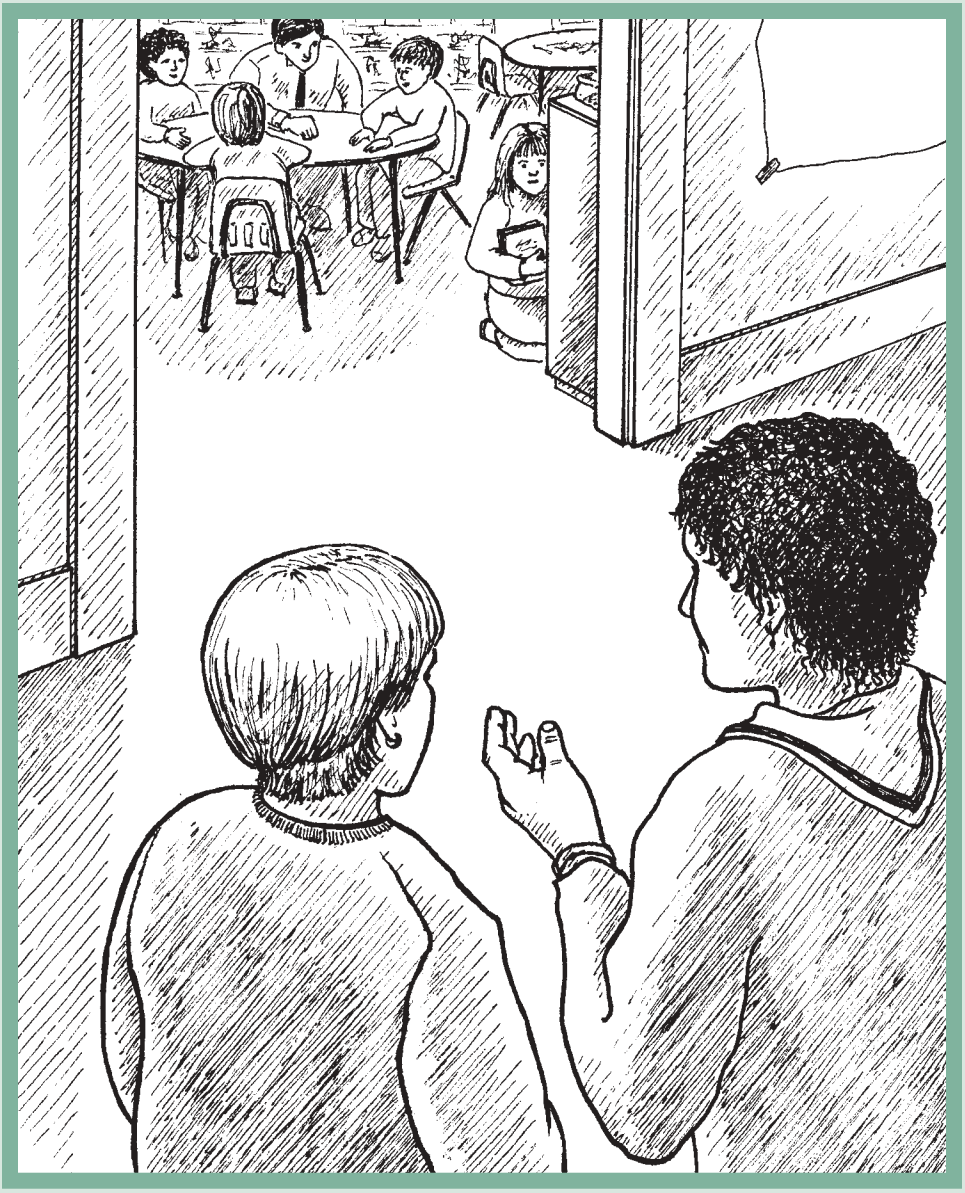
helping them to practice having dialogue with their colleagues, knowing what to do when they are faced with difficulties. In the past, people had just themselves, in their clasroom. Now they have someone to talk things through with, in different areas."

CESU now runs both a mentoring and a peer-coaching program. Three of the original mentors have become state trainers, and have delivered mentor trainings in several other school districts.

"Using the Pathwise tools has helped my mentee address issues that she identified as areas of concern, and to see success as she implements new ideas," says Mary Calder, one of the original mentors. "Likewise, looking at the best teaching practices has helped me to reflect on and improve my own skills."

Mentoring pairs meet once each week, for 45 minutes, and often keep in touch by email or phone in the meantime. "Our role is not to tell them what to do," Gile says of the mentors. "Our role is to support them through good dialogue, to avoid some of the pitfalls that we may see coming. We plan and apply this new knowledge collaboratively; then they teach it, and they reflect, and we have conversations about their reflection."

To learn more: *Contact Sherry Gile, Chittenden East Supervisory Union, (802) 434-2128.*



Leadership Mentoring

Only recently has the importance of colleague support for principals been recognized. But in fact, principals are more isolated than teachers ... School leaders seldom have someone with whom to talk openly and problem-solve. (p.42)

IV. Leadership Mentoring

Although I had interned with an administrator and taken numerous leadership and management courses, nothing had quite prepared me for the pressures and competing demands that come with the job of school leader. Those first few months as a new principal felt very similar to my first year as a new teacher. It was a trial by fire all over again, as I was expected to perform as well as my veteran peers. Fortunately, I was assigned a mentor – a retired yet successful principal, whose insight and experience buoyed me like "floaties" until I could safely swim on my own.

Sue Boyer, co-principal,
Union Elementary School, Montpelier

Nationwide, more than 50 percent of school principals will reach retirement age within the next few years, according to survey data from the National Association of School Principals. But the pressures and demands on school leaders from legislators, community members, and parents have increased to such an extent that many veteran teachers who once aspired to become school leaders no longer step forward (Daresh, 2001). Whether because of a decrease in financial incentives to leave the classroom, or because the administrative "hot seat" has simply become unappealing, there is a shortage of people who want to become school leaders (Daresh, 2001).

In Vermont, along with this shortage, 25 percent of school principals are leaving their jobs every year (*Education Week*, Jan. 2003). Some move on to schools with more resources and better pay; others take different jobs, such as curriculum coordinator. Currently the Vermont Educational Leadership Alliance, a consortium of educational associations, is using a three-year $500,000 federal grant to support efforts at addressing the principal-turnover problem.

Also, about 10 percent of Vermont principals — 28 during 2002-03 — are working on waivers, without the necessary licensure. This is an even higher rate than the number of

A new principal should self-select a mentor, not necessarily from the same supervisory union or district.

Vermont teachers currently working on waivers, and it further suggests how many administrators urgently need effective support.

In his book *Beginning the Principalship*, John Daresh suggests four survival strategies for new administrators:

- Find a mentor;
- Develop networks;
- Participate in professional associations;
- Maintain personal and family support.

Only recently has the importance of colleague support for principals been recognized. But in fact, principals are often more isolated than teachers (Hansen & Matthews, 2002). School leaders seldom have someone with whom to talk openly and problem-solve. Vermont's School Quality Standards and the proposed revisions to the licensing regulations pertaining to movement from Level I to Level II licensure require mentoring for all new educators. This includes administrators as well as teachers.

As discussed earlier in this Field Guide, the goals of mentoring — professional learning and retention — apply equally to beginning teachers and principals. The characteristics of effective mentors (see pp. 22-24) also relate equally well to both. Approachability, integrity, and the ability to listen are the attributes rated by mentors themselves as the three most useful characteristics of a good mentor.

A new principal should self-select a mentor, not necessarily from the same supervisory union or district. A principal with many years' experience will not necessarily be an effective mentor; survival on the job does not automatically result in wisdom and insight.

PEER MENTORING: A TOOL FOR ADMINISTRATOR RENEWAL

Colleague support or peer mentoring is a relationship of mutual benefit between two veteran administrators, or between a beginning and a veteran leader. Peer mentoring builds collegiality, enhances educator expertise and job satisfaction, and promotes professional growth (Hansen & Matthews, 2002).

Advantages of peer mentoring tend to be that:

- Risk-taking becomes a less threatening experience.

- Change is viewed as a process for growth and improvement.
- Leadership functions such as curriculum development, staff development, supervision, and evaluation are validated.
- Creativity and innovation are encouraged.
- Participants share and fulfill goals and ideals.
- The process encourages reflection and open communication.

WHAT SUPPORT PROGRAMS ARE UNDERWAY IN VERMONT?

What models, trainings, and support resources are available for aspiring, beginning, and veteran administrators? Following are brief descriptions of five ongoing programs that involve mentoring and colleague support.

For Aspiring Administrators

1. Administrative Cohort Program, Northeast Kingdom School Development Center

The Northeast Kingdom School Development Center (NEKSDC) is a collaborative partnership among several school districts, Lyndon Institute, St. Johnsbury Academy, and Lyndon State College. The Administrative Cohort Program has been designed to meet a regional need by providing a pool of qualified candidates for school leadership positions.

The program is open to those who hold a Vermont educator's license, have three years of successful teaching experience, and either hold or are working toward a master's degree. The cohort will complete five core courses based on the Vermont General Competencies for School District Administrators and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. One course is offered each semester, including summer.

A field-based internship enables each participant to apply theory and reflect on it in the real world of educational leadership. At the end, the intern jointly develops a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with his/her site mentor and the program director. The MOU describes the intern's experiences, thereby enhancing the knowledge gained.

Contact: *Bruce A. Richardson, Ed.D., Program Director, NEKSDC, Lyndon State College, Lyndonville 05851 (802) 626-6798; info@neksdc.org*

For Beginning and Veteran Administrators

1. Vermont School Leadership Project, Snelling Center for Government

The Vermont School Leadership Project offers intensive professional development for principals, superintendents, teachers, and other educators in leadership positions during 20 seminar days, scheduled over two summers and parts of two academic years.

The first summer session focuses on individual learning and leadership styles. Associates begin to articulate personal and professional goals, and develop a learning plan they will address throughout the program. The summer session is followed by a pair of two-day seminars and one three-day seminar focusing on personal leadership style, organizational leadership, and systems thinking. Associates apply their learning by developing a systems analysis of an issue or area within their school or district. This analysis will serve as the basis for the second summer session's work.

The results of each participant's systems analysis are presented, then critiqued and reviewed through a series of peer "consultancies." Participants explore strategies and develop a plan for implementing change, improving the organizational culture, and strengthening relationships within their communities. The results of each plan's implementation is presented to

FIELD NOTES

UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: A NEW PRINCIPAL'S FRIEND

In fall 1999, Jennifer Miller-Arsenault was beginning her first year as principal of Montpelier's Union Elementary School — her first year as a principal anywhere — when her superintendent paired her up with Ray Proulx. A former Vermont principal and superintendent, Proulx is now a UVM professor of education and a consultant in the field. He and Miller-Arsenault knew each other somewhat; and throughout that school year, as mentor and mentee, they got together at least once a month, and just talked.

"It was always in person," Miller-Arsenault recalls. "He'd come in and we'd just chat for an hour or so. It was almost always directed by me. Often I would say, 'I really want some help in thinking through this and this and this.'"

As a first-year principal who had replaced a long-time administrator at the school, Miller-Arsenault built good relationships with her special-education coordinator and the assistant to the principal. "So I felt I had some people

the cohort at the commencement retreat.

Through theoretical discussions, experiential activities, and personal reflection, VSLP associates consider leadership methods from the realms of business, government, the arts, and education. The associates network with a cohort of Vermont colleagues in exploring innovative ways to initiate change and become catalysts for the improvement of schools.

Contact: *Linda Wheatley, Leadership Programs Director*
Snelling Center for Government
130 South Willard Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401
Info@SnellingCenter.org

2. It's About Leadership (IAL)

It's About Leadership (IAL) is a year-long program that brings together principals, superintendents, and other school leaders. Participants choose the focus that is most relevant to them and their school as they work in large and small groups to enhance their leadership skills and knowledge.

Each IAL participant assesses his/her learning needs, develops a personal learning plan (PLP), and then works in a focused cohort group with others who are addressing similar issues. Because IAL is founded on the belief that leadership cannot be done alone, peer networking is a significant component of the program. Conferences, whole-group, and cohort meetings are

to talk to, but Ray was somebody who had proven himself to be an incredibly effective leader. It was really helpful to be able to talk to him. I felt like he was outside enough from the picture to be able to give some pretty effective advice.

"It was nice, also, because I felt I could open myself, just being a little more vulnerable. That wasn't a face I would want to present publicly in a position of leadership very often. But with Ray I could say, 'Oh — I think I blew it here,' or 'What do you think about a decision like this?' In a relationship like that, I was expected not to have all the answers."

Miller-Arsenault is still on the job, this year as a new mother who is now co-principal. She is still occasionally in touch with Ray.

"There have been some times when we had some dicier issues, that I picked up the phone and asked for some advice. When I found out I was pregnant, before I spoke to my superintendent to pitch the idea of a co-principalship, I picked up the phone and called Ray."

To learn more: *Contact Jennifer Miller-Arsenault, Union Elementary School, (802) 223-6343.*

The Vermont School Leadership Project is the best professional development I have been involved in for a long time. The program provides a rich blend of opportunities for personal growth and knowledge acquisition around leadership. Best of all, the weeks over two different summers and the weekends throughout the year are spent with the same cohort group of twenty individuals, letting us build a wonderful camaraderie and network of people with whom we can share the joys and the challenges of our work.

Mary Woodruff, principal, Winooski Middle School

designed to provide school leaders with opportunities to share support and ideas with their colleagues. Along with face-to-face meetings, IAL members use the online environment to find and share information.

Each cohort group is guided by a facilitator, who also provides members with personal, on-site support and follow-up. Peer support is supplemented with on-line and site-based coaching, providing members with continual access to the professional and personal encouragement of colleagues and coaches. IAL is a commitment to professional growth and personal renewal.

Contact: *Jill Mackler, (802) 453-5508; fax 453-5061; jillmackler@together.net.*

3. Leadership Program, Vermont Institutes

The VI Leadership Program aims to assist school leaders by providing direct and brokered services specific to the needs of individual leaders and their systems. Focus areas include:

- Personal and professional growth through coaching, networking, mentoring, advising, formal training, and institutes.
- Organizational growth through clarification of roles and responsibilities, relationships, teaming, collaboration, and alignment of structures and functions.
- Systemic growth through the completion of complex and focused analysis of items such as policies, cost centers, staffing, planning, and governance structures.
- Assisting in fiscal planning and allocating resources, and training in utilizing management as a leadership tool.

Vermont Institutes personnel believe they can best give substantial help to school leaders by building sustained relationships that address systemic conditions, create community of purpose, and provide seamless, integrated, and purposeful activity. VI is committed to supporting to school leaders through culturally specific training, planning, and services.

Contact: *Ray Proulx, (802) 828-0068; fax, 828-0076; Rproulx@zoo.uvm.edu; or visit www.vermontinstitutes.org.*

Appendices

Appendix A

SOURCES

The Vermont Equal Educational Opportunity Act (1997), commonly referred to as Act 60.

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Appendix B

RESOURCES

Boreen, J., M. Johnson, D. Niday, & J. Potts (2000). *Mentoring Beginning Teachers*. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

This book offers strategies for those K-12 teachers who work as mentors with beginning teachers in their school districts. By modeling reflective thinking practices, mentors can enhance both their own and a beginning teacher's professional growth.

Brock, B.L. & M.L. Grady (2001). *From First Year to First Rate: Principals Guiding Beginning Teachers* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks CA: Corwin Press.

Carr, J., N. Herman, and D. Harris (in press). *Shared Journey: Mentoring, Colleague Support, and Collaborative School Renewal*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

Few educators have received training in the skills they need to join productively in mentoring, coaching, and teaming projects, along with study groups, critical friends relationships, and school governance councils — all key interactions through which administrators and teachers can better lead and learn together to help all students succeed. This book engages readers in reflection and needs assessment on their knowledge and skills for collaboration. It also provides a set of strategies and tools that educators can use right away as they work on collaborative approaches to school improvement.

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Based on the "PRAXIS III Classroom Performance Assessment," this framework identifies those aspects of a teacher's responsibilities that have been documented, through empirical studies and research, as promoting improved student learning.

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Gordon and Maxey explore the reasons why beginning teachers struggle,

and they provide research-based plans for helping these newcomers make the most of their initial teaching years. They propose "beginning teacher assistance programs" as a practical strategy for success.

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Scherer, Marge (1999). *A Better Beginning: Supporting and Mentoring New Teachers.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

This book lays out the fundamentals for helping new teachers succeed. Sections include: what new teachers need, creating an induction program, making mentoring meaningful, planning comprehensive teacher support, improving induction and communication.

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Villani, S. (2002). *Mentoring Programs for New Teachers: Models of Induction and Support*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Inc.

Villani offers models of effective mentoring programs, along with important considerations to keep in mind as you set up a mentoring program in your district or school.

WEB SITES

Beginning Teachers Forum

www.teachers.net/mentors/beginning_teachers/

Your state's forum (teachers.net/states/vt) has a curriculum chatboard, career support center, and project center, along with international and state information.

Alliance for Excellent Education

www.web.all4ed.org/publications/index.html

Case studies, issue briefs, reports and research, e.g.: "New Teacher Excellence: Retaining our Best." (2002)

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future
www.nctaf.org

NCTAF's site has its 2003 report, No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children, *along with its widely influential 1996 report,* What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future, *and myriad other resources, research summaries, and publications.*

The NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education
www.nfie.org

The News and Publications section has a guide to "Creating a Teacher Mentoring Program."

How to Be an Effective Teacher, book by Harry and Rosemary Wong, is available at www.effectiveteaching.com.

Enhancing Professional Practice, book by Charlotte Danielson, is available at www.ascd.org.

The "Pathwise" Framework Induction Program, kit by Charlotte Danielson, is available at www.teachingandlearning.org.

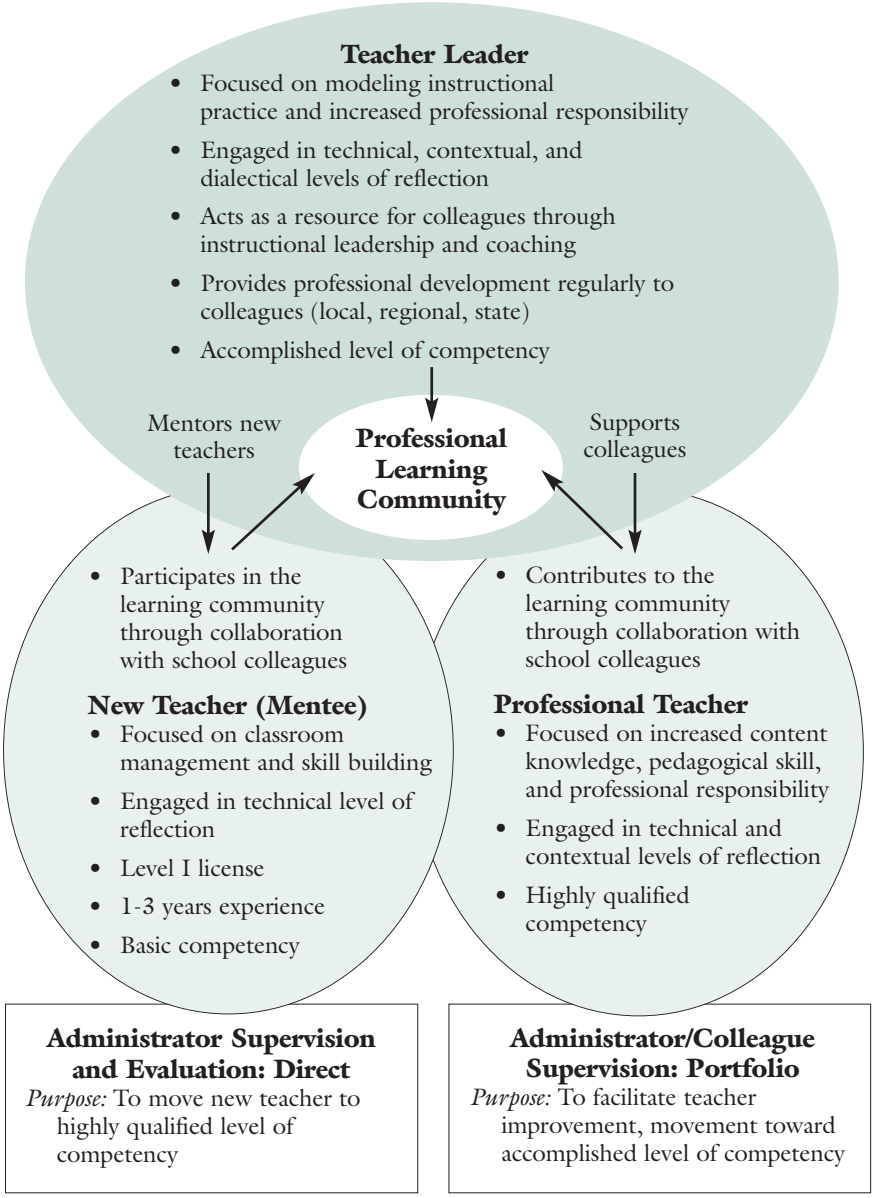
The Vermont Teacher Quality Enhancement program
www.sseppd

This is the home page for Vermont's statewide system of educator preparation and professional development. It's the place to go to see what is happening in the various regions, what job and professional-development opportunities are available. The site also contains links to VT DOE, Vermont Institutes, and other useful resources.

The Vermont World Class Teaching Project
www.vtworldclassteaching.org

This is the homepage for the National Board certification program in Vermont. It provides information on support available to pre-candidates, candidates, and support providers.

STAGES OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO EACH OTHER AND THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY



Laurie Lawrence, 2003

Appendix C

LAWS AND POLICIES INFLUENCING EDUCATOR MENTORING IN VERMONT

1. Recommendations on Mentoring and Professional Development from the Vermont Commission on Educator Quality

The Vermont Commission for Educator Quality was convened in January 2001 by then-Commissioner of Education David Wolk and then-Governor Howard Dean, who charged it with developing a five-year action plan that the State Board of Education and the Department of Education could use as a blueprint for improving educator and teaching quality.

The Commission, led by Doug Walker and Edie Beatty, has adopted a plan that places mentoring and professional development at the forefront of initiatives to improve teaching quality. Teacher retention, another issue dealt with by the Commission, can also be addressed in large part by effective mentoring and professional development.

The Commission's vision on mentoring is that, "for both new teachers and new administrators, we need to build structured mentoring and colleague support programs that increase retention improve educator quality and student achievement, and are accessible in every Vermont school." (VCEQ draft report, 2003).

The Commission's specific recommendations are to:

1) Develop mentoring program guidelines that include an implementation plan, essential conditions in schools and districts, incentives, training models, characteristics of a structured program, and definitions.

2) Require mentoring for attainment of Level II license by educators holding and using a Level I license.

3) Establish and sustain networks for mentoring and colleague support by identifying currently successful collegial learning networks, and by engaging professional organizations and support structures in the field.

4) Develop and improve ongoing mentoring-related data collection, analysis, and reporting — for example, on what programs are being used; the number of mentors currently trained; demographics about mentor background, credentials, and performance history; compensation and working conditions for mentors and mentees; training available to mentors, along with follow-up collegial learning opportunities; the number of beginning teachers working in Vermont; and the number who have access to a structured mentoring program with (or without) release time.

In the area of professional pevelopment, the VCEQ also has much to recommend in support of creating collegial learning communities, and of providing sufficient time to carry out planning and learning activities that help to improve the quality of teaching. The Commission's vision for professional development is: "All Vermont educators should be participating in career-long, differentiated professional development that results in student attainment of the Vermont standards, and plays a key role in developing communities of young and adult learners who are committed to continuous improvement."

Specific VCEQ recommendations that relate to colleague support initiatives include:

1) Ensure that teachers have at least one hour per day, and appropriate professional

development, to work in collaborative teams — or have 25 percent of their work time devoted to learning and collaboration.

2) Build the capacity to deliver job-embedded professional development.

3) Create and sustain a statewide system of regional professional development collaboratives.

4) Provide professional development opportunities that encourage and allow educators to move through each developmental level of the career continuum.

5) Provide and evaluate professional development on standards-based instruction and assessment for all educators.

Act 60's School Quality Requirements

Vermont has, like the federal government, enacted legislation that aims in part to improve the quality of education for all children by improving the quality of teaching.

Specifically, Section 2120.4 of Act 60, Vermont's Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1997, addresses professional development for all teachers and paraprofessionals as key to improving teaching quality. Act 60 requires:

- that each school develop and implement needs-based professional development for all professional staff;
- that professional development be coordinated with district-wide goals and regional and local standards boards;
- that all new professional staff are provided appropriate training in standards-based instruction; and
- that each school implement a mentoring system for professional staff in their first two years of employment with the school.

The implications of these requirements for mentoring, and the professional development required to train mentors, are significant. No longer can schools leave new teachers to sink or swim just because that is the way it has always been done. New teachers are required to receive support from their schools in their first two years — and in order for this support to be beneficial and lead to professional growth and learning, it must be given by experienced teachers who have themselves received training and support as mentors.

This law, combined with funding from Title II of No Child Left Behind, creates the legal and moral imperative to develop professional learning cultures for all teachers — cultures that must be a continuum of growth and learning from the first year of teaching to the last.

On the following pages is a Quality Standards Rubric, developed by a DOE working group to help school leaders understand how to respond effectively to these Act 60 requirements.

DRAFT

SCHOOL QUALITY STANDARDS
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RUBRIC

2120.4 (a) Each school shall develop and implement a school-wide system of needs-based professional development for all professional staff including administrators and other staff involved in student instruction, including paraprofessionals.

	EXPLORATION
Professional Development Plan	The superintendent, in consultation with administrators, develops a plan yearly.
Alignment with School Action Plans	Professional development opportunities may relate to the school's action plan and the delivery of curriculum and instruction but it is not a planned outcome.
Alignment with the Vermont Standards	There is no obvious connection between the professional development system and the Vermont Standards
Alignment with the Educational Support System	There is no connection between the professional development system and the school's Educational Support System.
Resource Support	The school/district does not allocate adequate resources to support the professional development plan.
Data Driven Professional Development Planning	There is no system in place that uses data for professional development planning purposes.
Link to Student Learning Outcomes	Only the teaching staff is engaged in professional development and student learning outcomes are not considered when designing professional development activities.

TRANSITION	FULL IMPLEMENTATION
District and school administrators have developed a long-term plan for continuous support of professional growth needs for all teaching staff.	A cross section of educators and administrators has developed a long-term plan for continuous support of professional growth needs for all school personnel.
Professional development opportunities show connection to the school's action and to the delivery of curriculum and instruction.	Professional development opportunities show direct connection to the school's action and clearly enhance the delivery of curriculum and instruction.
The importance of the Vermont Standards is acknowledged, but the means for incorporating them into the professional development system are not explicitly stated.	The professional development system is explicitly designed to strengthen content and pedagogy for all staff to assure that all students have opportunities to meet the VT standards.
There is general awareness that the professional development system should support the capacity of the Educational Support System, but no process is in place yet.	Annual student performance and behavioral data is analyzed and used to identify and plan for professional development needs necessary to build the overall capacity of the school's Educational Support System.
The school/district allocates adequate resources (e.g., release time, substitute teachers, professional training programs) but does not consistently expend the allocated amount.	The school/district allocates and expends comprehensive resources (e.g., release time, substitute teachers, professional training programs) necessary to implement the professional development plan.
There is a system in place to examine data sources to guide professional development planning but the data is not collected in a timely way so that data is available when needed for planning purposes.	The system includes a process for research and data collection in order to identify professional development needs. Data to be collected include: • Student performance data • Educator evaluation and supervision data • Needs assessment of staff • Current knowledge and research
Educators and some staff are engaged in professional development activities, which have targeted student learning outcomes. The match between activities and student learning outcomes is not explicit.	• All staff members are engaged in professional development activities, which are explicitly designed to provide teachers with the skills and abilities to help students achieve identified learning outcomes.

	EXPLORATION
Attention to Content and Process	The professional activities include only one or none of the following: • using learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal; • applying knowledge about human learning and change; • providing educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.
Assessment of the Professional Development System	The professional development system is assessed for participation and logistical conditions but not for its impact on student performance.
Alignment with Staff Evaluation and Supervision Policies	There is a professional development system. There is a supervision and evaluation policy. Staff development committees/personnel have awareness of the both professional development system and the supervision and evaluation policy.
Coordination and Alignment of IPDP with School's Action Plan and Professional Development Needs	Professional development experiences are designed as one size fits all, with no direct connection to the IPDP or to the school's and district goals.
Training and Support for New Professional Staff	There is no defined program for orientation and support for new professionals.

TRANSITION	FULL IMPLEMENTATION
The professional activities include only two of the following: • using learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal; • applying knowledge about human learning and change; • providing educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.	The professional activities include: • using learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal; • applying knowledge about human learning and change; • providing educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.
The school/district is in the process of developing a plan to assess the professional development system using student data, educator evaluation and supervision data, self-assessments, teacher surveys and current research.	The professional development system is assessed for its effectiveness on improving student performance by using student data, educator evaluation and supervision data, self-assessments, teacher surveys and current research.
Best practices are embedded in professional development offerings and in the supervision and evaluation policies. Educators are looking systematically at how the two processes relate, and how supervision/evaluation and professional development work together.	Procedures and policies in supervision and evaluation reflect what is known about best practice in professional development. Information from supervision and evaluation feeds into professional development design. The supervision and evaluation system includes the VT Standards for Professional Educators and the Learning Opportunities of the VT Framework.
Professional development experiences are connected to the Individual Professional Development Plan. Educators are in the process of making connections to the school's and district goals.	Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDP) articulate a connection to school action plan and district goals. Administrators and staff understand the relationship of individual, school, and district professional development goals and plan their work accordingly. Tools are developed to clarify the relationships and to encourage connection between individual goals, action plans, and district goals.
New professionals receive copies of the *VT Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities.* They are reviewed in a general orientation for new faculty. Expectations regarding standards-based instruction, curriculum, and assessment are articulated for all new professionals.	All new professionals are provided with group and/or individual training opportunities to familiarize them with *VT Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities.* The mentoring program addresses standards-based instruction, curriculum, and assessment based on the new teacher's individual needs.

	EXPLORATION
Development of IPDPs for New Professional Staff	The local standards board's support for new professional staff in the development of their IPDP is sporadic and not a planned event.
Mentoring	There is no mentoring program available.

VSBPE proposed licensure change

The Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators has proposed that new regulations for teacher licensing include language requiring all new teachers to demonstrate that they have successfully practiced in their endorsement area for three years with support of a mentor, in order to move from a Level I (initial) license to a Level II (professional) license.

There currently are only two levels of licensure in Vermont. However, the VSBPE is considering following the lead of other states that have developed a Level III (master) license.

NCLB on teacher quality

With the passage of the U.S. Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001, commonly referred to as the No Child Left Behind Act, the nation has placed teacher quality at the forefront. The law mandates that by the end of the 2005-2006 school year, all teachers in core academic subjects must be "highly qualified," and all paraprofessionals working in programs supported with Title I funds must meet the requirements to be "highly qualified" as well.

TRANSITION	FULL IMPLEMENTATION
Local Standards Boards offer workshops and consultation to all new staff. Each new Level II staff has an approved IPDP but it is not consistently completed within six months from date of employment.	Local Standards Boards offer workshops and consultation to all new staff. Each new Level II staff has an approved IPDP not later than six months from the date of employment.
The school/district is in the process of planning a mentoring program for new professional staff, which will be implemented the next school year.	A mentoring system, providing support to new professional staff over a two year period is in place and includes the following: • the goals and expectations for the relationship; • the criteria and process for selecting and matching mentors and protégés; • a description of the training individuals need to serve as mentors; • the process for mentoring; • a support structure including physical arrangements and logistics; • a monitoring process for continual assessment; and • an evaluation of the mentor's skills.

The attention given by the law to teacher quality provides schools with the moral imperative to recruit and retain high-quality teachers.

Title II of the law also provides schools with the opportunity to receive grant funds to develop and implement initiatives:

1. to promote retention of highly qualified teachers, including teacher mentoring by exemplary teachers, principals, and administrators;

2. to develop induction and support programs for teachers and principals in the first three years of service; and

3. to carry out teacher advancement initiatives that promote professional growth and multiple career paths (such as paths to becoming a mentor teacher or an exemplary teacher). (ESEA, 2001)

Appendix D

VERMONT MENTORING & COLLEAGUE SUPPORT PROGRAMS

1. CONTACT PEOPLE

Center for Curriculum Renewal
Judy Carr
(802) 860-6802
jcarrvt@aol.com

Nancy Herman
(802) 985-4057
vtherman@aol.com

Critical Friends
Edorah Frazer
(802) 425-4937
Edorah@aol.com

Martha Rich
martha.rich@thet.net

Courage to Teach
Ken Bergstrom, Ed.D.
(802) 244-6332
kberg22@aol.com

David Leo-Nyquist, Ph.D.
(802) 985-3765
leonyquist@netscape.net

It's About Leadership
Jill Mackler
(802) 453-5508
fax: 453-5061
jillmackler@together.net

Leadership Program, Vermont Institutes
Ray Proulx
(802) 828-0068
fax: 828-0076
www.vermontinstitutes.org

National Board Certified Teachers
Laurie Lawrence
Vermont World Class Teaching Project
(802) 747-0060
llawrence@vtworldclassteaching.org

Northeast Kingdom School Development Center
Bruce Richardson
Northeast Teacher Quality Network Coordinator
(802) 626-6798
info@neksdc.org

Pathwise
Sue Boyer
Teacher Quality Enhancement
Vermont Institutes
sueboyer @gmavt.net
www.vermontinstitutes.org

Carla Kenny
Educational Testing Services
1-800-297-9051 Ext. #3
CKenney@mktgworks.com

The Teacher Knowledge Project
Kim Lier
(802)-258-3340
kim.lier@sit.edu
www.sit.edu/tkp

Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE)
Edith Beatty
Director
(802) 828-0294
ebeatty@vermontinstitutes.org

REGIONAL COORDINATORS:
Northeast (co-coordinator):
Bruce Richardson
info@neksdc.org

Northeast (co-coordinator):
Linda Metzke
indam11@charter.net

Northwest:
Carol Smith
carolsm@aol.com

Edorah Fraser
edorah@aol.com

Central:
Peg Meyer
pegm@together.net

Southeast:
Lyn Haas
lhaas@sover.net

Southwest:
Carol Spencer
cacia@sover.net

For general information about mentoring and colleague support:
Sue Boyer
sueboyer @gmavt.net

Lynn Murray
lynnmurray@direcway.com

Anne Bordonaro
abordanaro@doe.state.vt.us

Vermont School Leadership Project, Snelling Center for Government
Linda Wheatley
130 South Willard Street,
Burlington, VT 05401
Info@SnellingCenter.org

2. CERTIFIED PATHWISE STATE TRAINERS

Denise Bedard-Comstock,
Franklin Central SU.
Cdebc@yahoo.com

Mary Calder, Chittenden East SU.
calderma@att.net

Allyson Coburn, Blue Mountain U.
Allycoburn@yahoo.com

Gail Curtis, Rutland Central SU.
Gcurtis@rcsu

Pam Foust, Chittenden East SU.
Pkfoust@aol.com

Sherry Gile, Chittenden East SU.
SDGile@aol.com

Beth Loiselle, Franklin Central
bethloiselle@yahoo.com

Nancy Perkins, Blue Mountain U.
Nperk@together.net

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Vermont Educator-Contributors

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Cover artwork by Edie Beatty

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Editing & Design Publication Services, Montpelier

THE VERMONT INSTITUTES

Equity and Excellence for all Students

Dillingham Hall
7 West Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

Phone: 802-828-0060
Fax: 802-828-0076
Web: www.vermontinstitutes.org