

Catamount Community Schools Collaborative: A Research-Policy-Practice Partnership meets UACS

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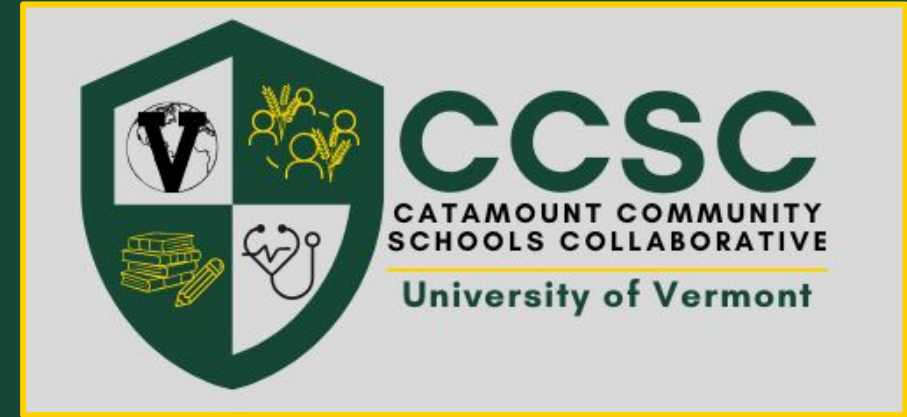
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Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Context: Community Schools in Vermont
- Catamount Community Schools Collaborative Origin Story
 - RPP: University + SEA + CS
 - RP³: Centering Policy
 - CCSC: Leveraging University Infrastructure
- RP³ + UACS in Action
 - Partnership + Policy Inventory: Unpacking UACS values through CCSC
- Collective Reflections
 - Value added of RP³: Partnerships centered around UACS + CS



Community Schools in Vermont

...are not singular programs or strategies. Rather, it represents a fundamental rethinking of how to deliver public education. It's how we do school.

...align with Vermont's student-centered approach to learning and an existing regulatory framework for education.

...close equity gaps through the provision of services, resources, and opportunities for students AND their families, in the school.

.... leverage Vermont's unique context, history, and values through place- based services and relational assets in rural communities emphasizing deeper learning by doing, schools as community centers and co-location of services for students, families, and community.



VT Act 67 Community Schools Cohort

Caledonia Central Supervisory Union (5-districts)
Cabot School, PK-12, (N=159)

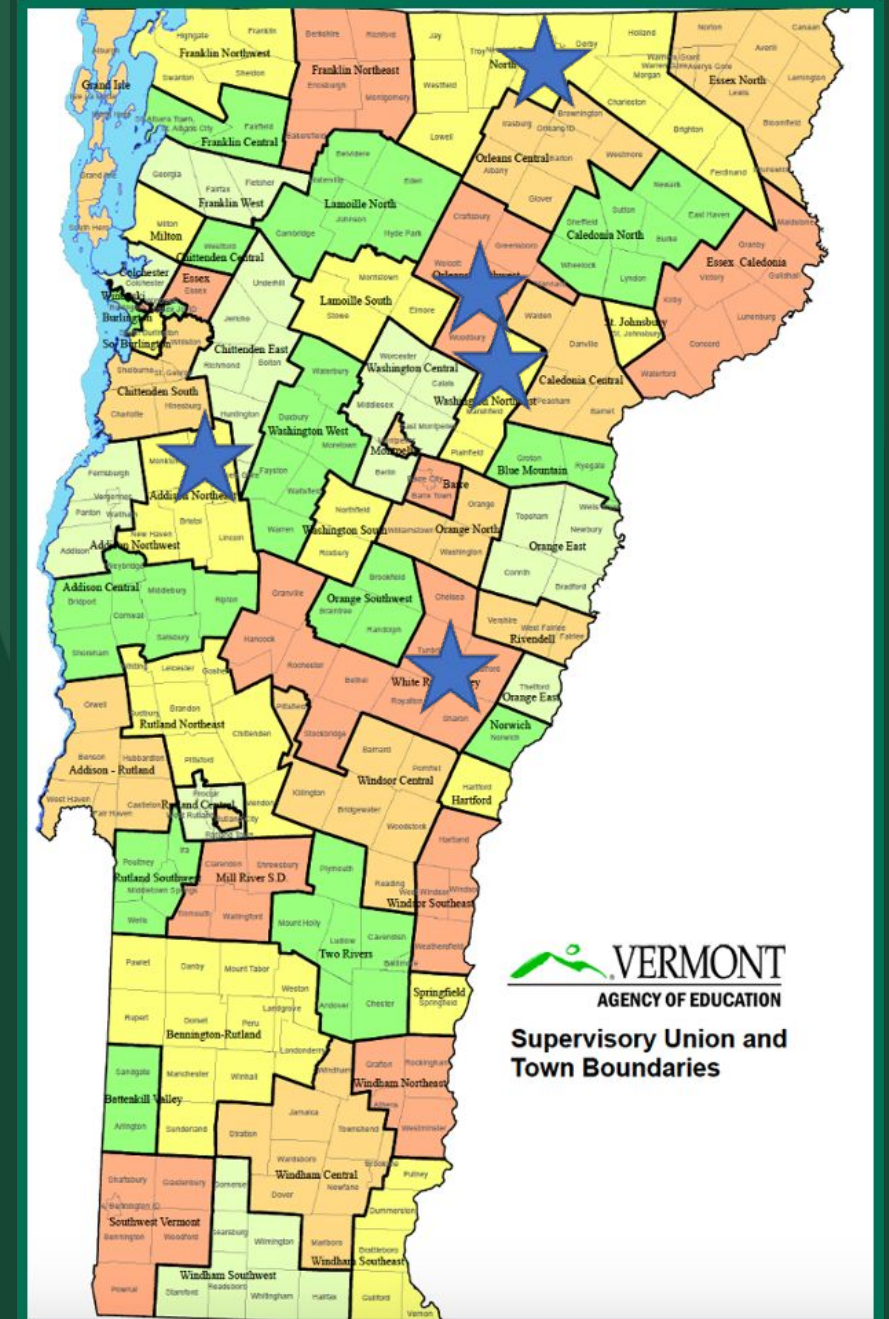
Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union (5-districts)
Hazen Union School, Grades 7-12, (N=290)

North Country Supervisory Union (10-districts)
PK-12, 12 schools, (N=2,684)

Addison Northwest Supervisory District
Vergennes Union Elementary School, K-6 (N=295)

White River Valley Supervisory Union (5-districts)
White River Valley Middle School, 6-8, (N=132)

Across our Act 67 community schools, we are supporting over 3,560 PreK-12 students, their families, and communities.



CATAMOUNT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COLLABORATIVE

The evolutionary timeline of a University-Assisted Community School in the State of Vermont.

2021

VT Act 67 - The Community Schools Act



In 2021, the VT State Legislature passed Act 67 - The Community Schools Act; UVM faculty establish relationship with VT Agency of Education (AOE).

2022

Community Schools Research-Practice Partnership



VT AOE and UVM increase personnel supporting Community Schools implementation; Research-Practice Partnership (RPP) is officially established through MOUs, consistent meeting/site visit attendance; Evaluation and research support.

2023

Evolution to Research-Policy-Practice Partnership (RP3)



Increased UVM visibility through evaluation and research support; Collaborative research agenda established with AOE and Community School partners; Increased participation in national forums, state policy development, networks, and conferences telling the Vermont CS story.

2024

Catamount Community Schools Collaborative (CCSC)



Internal UVM funding, continued VT Legislative funding, and significant external funding through the U.S. DoE allows for increased infrastructure, support, and expansion of CS in VT; Sparks the official formation of a UACS model in VT - the CCSC.

Our Origin

The VT CS RPP was solidified and formalized through the co-creation of a data-sharing agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the VT AOE and UVM's College of Education and Social Services (CESS), concretizing our RPP shared goals and objectives of:

- 1) **studying early implementation** of Vermont CS supported by Act 67 (2021-2024),
- 2) **describing the core features and operational models of CS,**
- 3) **understanding the role of the CS coordinator** in organizing and implementing the CS model in a rural state, and
- 4) **exploring the effectiveness of CS implementation** aligned with appropriate benchmarks within CS developmental phases.

Role of the SEA: Reflecting Community School Values

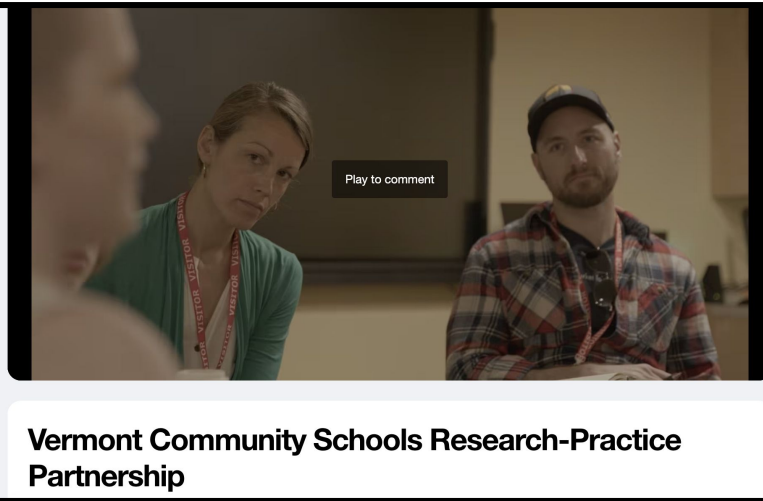
Act 67 value statements and goals remain a primary focus of the AOE.

The VT AOE itself within the developing Vermont Community School model as a participant who would support and influence implementation efforts.

- Equity & Sustainability Embedded in Partnership Design: AOE & Act 67 awardees
- Freedom and Unity - FRUNITY!
- Foster Community among Act 67 awardees and RPP (UVM, AOE & ... Act 67 awardees)
- Supportive Accountability Approach
- Ethical Framework for Evaluation

The Vermont CS Research-Practice-Partnership (RPP)

The VT community schools Research Practice Partnership (RPP) is non-linear, democratic, participatory and hyper local.



- Interactional not transactional
- Relational trust earned over time
- Participatory research and evaluation methods prioritized (e.g., CBPR, YPAR)
- Collect multiple data sources, multiple voices, and engage in equitable analysis and interpretation
- Focus on process implementation aligned with CS implementation science, resisting the urge/pressure to study specific student outcomes
- Democratization of knowledge production and dissemination



The University of Vermont

Centering Policy: RPP to RP³

Due in large part to the engagement and partnership with an SEA, the focus of the VT CS RPP expanded beyond evaluation and implementation research to include educational policy analysis, implementation, and evaluation, at both local and state levels.

- State Policy Evaluation: National Dissemination
- School Board Engagement
- Strategic Planning
- State Testimonies & State Board of Education

Focus of RP³ evolved to included digital storytelling, legislative advocacy efforts, concentrated support and language for engaging with school boards and administrative bodies.



CCSC:How We Do the Work

Core values of UACS including **place-based, democratic, mutually transformative, anti-racist, equity centered and long-term partnerships between universities and schools** articulated by the Netter Center (Harkavy et al., 2020) and UACS leaders.

The CCSC has embraced and advanced **UACS values to align with the unique University-SEA-CS RP³** underpinnings of the CCSC.

The CCSC UACS **values include relational trust, participatory scholarship and ethical government**

Supportive Infrastructure: Networking Networks



CCSC: Leveraging Students & Faculty

The CCSC provides comprehensive support for CS implementation, evaluation and sustainability by leveraging:

- (a) service-learning courses and infrastructure;
- (b) school partnerships & field experiences in several undergraduate and graduate programs across UVM;
- (c) research productivity of faculty spanning several colleges seeking to support educational and health equity; and
- (d) community engagement initiatives.

Intergenerational Meals Program at Newport Town School

- Cynthia Herbert, SHIE Doctoral Student & Nadiya Becoats, Food Systems Undergrad

Applied Community Engaged Scholarship: State CS Policy

- Barbie Collette, SHIE Doctoral Student

Early Childhood Education & Community Development in Newport Town, VT

- UVM MPH & PH Undergraduate Students

School-Based Mental Health Partnerships at Cabot School & Vergennes Elementary School in Cabot and Vergennes, VT

- Nova Moredecai & Vanessa Granados, Graduate Clinical Mental Health Counseling Students

CCSC Student & Faculty Involvement at Hazen Union School and White River Valley Supervisory Union

- UVM MPH Student & Food Systems Undergrad, Vermont Child Health Improvement Program, College of Medicine

Community Spotlight: Intergenerational Meals Program

- Partnership with Newport Town School (K-6, N=125) & North Country Supervisory Union
- Focus on food security and senior loneliness/community engagement
- September 2024 through May 2025
- Partnership with local organizations to spread the word, bring in new community elders
- Bimonthly lunch & structured game/art project



RP³ + UACS in Action: Small Group Work

- What values of the CCSC strike you?
- In what ways do you engage or want to engage with policy as it relates to CS and UACS?
- What policy levers and partnerships exist to support CS and UACS engagement in your local community?
- Think about your own institution, what initiatives exist and what strategic priorities could you align with in support of CS?

CCSC Lessons Learned

Braided Funding

Funding and the influx of resources to a multi-organizational, collaborative University + SEA is complicated and nuanced

Pickle and Opportunity

University resources & social capital for funding

Funding Timelines and Agenda Differences

RP³: Research and Roles

System level innovations across organizations (UVM, AOE & CS)

Leverage expertise, social capital and resources

1 + 1 = 3

Hub and spoke model of CCSC-RP3

Elevation of RP³ and community engaged scholarship

Lead With Values

Leading with values and de-emphasizing funding and structural elements allows space and time for trust to be established.

“Slow Food” Mentality and Maintaining Long-game approach.

Relationships First, Always

Cultural Humility, Flatten Hierarchy

Next Steps

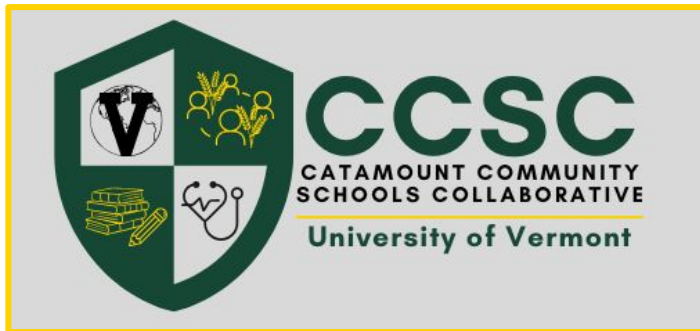
- Expand CS graduate course offerings and micro-credentialing
- Build a statewide CS community of practice (CoPra) to connect and sustain VT CS; CS community of policy (CoPol) to support and sustain statewide CS advocacy and policy
- Develop and validate a CS leadership mindset instrument
- Support a new cohort of CS in VT, identified and resourced through braided funding by CCSC and AOE
- Strengthening capacity of inter-agency support and infrastructure to support CS
- University CS asset and partnership inventory through CCSC



Thank you!

Questions? Comments? We would love to hear from you!

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The Vermont Agency of Education/
ARP-ESSER Funds

The University of Vermont's Leahy
Institute for Rural Partnerships (LIRP)

Congressionally Funded Community
Project (CFCP) funding through the
Office of Postsecondary Education, US
Department of Education and the Office
of Senator Bernie Sanders

National Network for Education
Research-Practice Partnerships
(NNERPP)

Collective Reflection: Levels of Resiliency

- Local Community + Little P Politics
 - School Board
 - Principal + Superintendent
- Vertical and Horizontal Expansion of “Community” in Community Schools
- Big P + Little P: State Policy makers connection and entry points into CS
 - Digital Stories
 - State legislative testimonies
 - State Board of Education