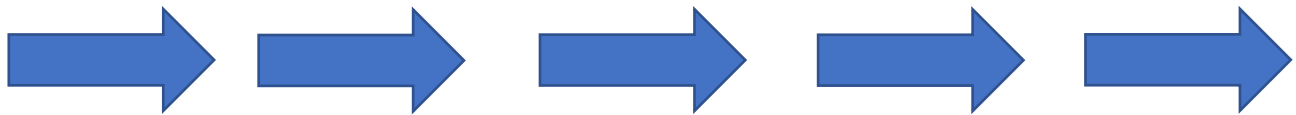


Hello senators- I'm Ric Reardon and I am the Director of Education at Castleton University and I also direct the Castleton Center for Schools which I want to talk about this afternoon

The Center has been around since 2002. We offer institutes, trainings, symposiums, independent studies, workshops and over 350 graduate level courses a year for Vermont's teachers, support staff, and administrators. The Center is the result of the vision our former president, Dave Wolk, had to provide rigorous and relevant PD opportunities for the lower half of the state, where he felt opportunities were scarce. We started out offering 20-25 courses a year to a few local districts and we now have a presence across all 14 Vermont counties impacting the vast majority of the state's 300+ schools. Teachers and other educators use our coursework to for re-licensure, to add teaching endorsements, to move along their district's salary scale, as electives in various degree programs, or, probably most importantly, to improve their practice.

We see a clear continuum of learning for prospective and practicing teachers:

Preservice-Induction-Mentoring/Coaching-Professional Development-Attaining Advanced Degrees



At the Center, we bridge the learning of preservice teachers with continuing education opportunities for practicing educators in the schools once they are hired. Some of our courses and PD specifically address induction and mentoring/coaching support (our partnership with the AOE in their pilot for mentoring new special educators) some courses are used for professional development aligned with their district's Continuous Improvement Plans, and other courses may be transferred into graduate programs upon matriculation.

I do want to mention the "working toward advanced degrees" aspect of the continuum I mentioned previously and the Center's role there (this gets buried in the lead sometimes). There have been many occasions when, in my role as Director of the Center, I have marketed degree programs to course participants and many of them eventually decide to matriculate into one of our graduate programs in Special Education, Educational Leadership or Educational Research and then transfer courses they have taken with the Center into those degree programs. We have run two full cohorts of 29 teacher leaders (NEK and Rutland City) through our Master of Arts in Educational Leadership program following connections I was able to make through the Center for Schools and 2 more cohorts of 21 teacher leaders (SVSU and BRSU) are a part of our current cohort of principal candidates- of which there are 58.

We are also VERY proud of our professional partnerships with Jay at the VPA, Chelsea and Jeff at the VSA, Jeff Evans at VTCLA, Darren at the VCSEA, many staff members at the Agency of Education, a number of the early childhood organizations like BBF, LGK, VTAEYC, Matt at the Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance- because of our VERY successful Early Childhood Educators Institute offered every summer for the past 7 years.

I think what we do best is to listen to the field and respond with proposed support options that meet unique and pressing needs. For instance, we are working right now with the Orleans Southwest SU on offering a series of 5 behavior support courses for a number of staff members working with students with significant behavior challenges in their schools. Down south in the SVSU, we have facilitated book studies and professional development opportunities for teachers, support staff, and administrators addressing the challenges and rewards of meaningfully including students with disabilities in general education learning environments.

I sit in on monthly meetings with Assistant Superintendents and Directors of Curriculum down here in the southwest quadrant of the state who are in charge of professional development in their districts and I respond to their individual and collective requests for professional development- some of it is offered across multiple districts (we call that Points of Commonality) and some of it is crafted specifically for one school or district. We are convinced that the model of listening to the field and working hard to be present in the schools to get a feel for the culture and inner-workings of those schools works well for us and our plan, even with the merger, is to make sure we maintain the opportunity to continue to do that. I'd be happy to take any questions.

Literacy-

Support the Stern Center with credit for the Orton-Gillingham and Mindplay

Courses in Literacy and Reading offered in the past 2 years through the Center

Structured literacy Intervention Practices K-6

Language and Literacy Foundations and Intervention

Direct Instruction in Teaching Reading

Sharing the Joy of Reading

Reading and the Brain (stern)

Early Language and literacy Development

Lead to Read (Adolescent Literacy)