



## **GrowVT-ED Academy - A “Grow Your Own” Teacher Program**

Good Afternoon. My name is Dr. Juliette Longchamp, the Director of Professional Programs at Vermont-NEA. Prior to my work at Vermont-NEA, I taught for thirty years, the last 25 at Williston Central School. I am a National Board Certified Teacher and Vermont Certified in Elementary, Special Education and Middle School in Science, Social Studies, English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Over the past decade I have been formally and informally supporting prospective teachers earn initial Vermont licensure through the Peer Review Process and serve on the Peer Review Advisory Committee. For the past five years, I have offered a Castleton year-long course helping prospective educators complete their Peer Review Portfolio. This program has been successful and is one that the Agency of Education Peer Review Coordinator recommends for Peer Review Candidates who seek support.

This winter, a group of seven NEK Curriculum Directors asked if Vermont-NEA might develop a “Grow Your Own” Peer Review Program to help support the many teachers they will need to hire on provisional licenses during the 22-23 School Year. The Curriculum Directors especially wanted to recruit community members who work in the school as support staff, substitute teachers and other positions. Nationally, 80% of support staff live in the communities where they work, and the hope for these NEK Curriculum Directors is that through a supported program, these prospective teachers will continue to teach, learn

and grow in the district, contributing to a more sustainable and effective teaching workforce.

Knowing the need for this type of program statewide, I was asked to propose this program on a larger scale. To equip new educators with content and skills through nontraditional routes to teacher certification requires careful curriculum design and support that provides opportunities to integrate and apply new learning in real time. Teacher quality matters. Effective educators have an immense influence on the lives of children, and conversely, poor teachers may have lasting negative impacts. Building a pool of teachers quickly to fill the emergency needs of Vermont schools needs to be intentionally designed and implemented to ensure that these prospective educators are learning key content and pedagogy and are supported by our strongest educators as mentors and instructors. Student learning will suffer if these educators are not well-supported. GrowVT-Ed Academy is our proposal to do just that.

GrowVT-Ed will support teachers hired on provisional licenses during their first year in the classroom. The four levels of support new educators receive through this program include:

**School Based Mentor:** Each new educator will have a trained mentor with whom they attend weekly meetings. Mentors will observe their mentees and support their growing practice (content, pedagogy, classroom management and environment, lesson planning) as well as support them in acclimating to the school culture.

**District Teacher Lead:** Each district will appoint a Teacher Lead that will work with the GrowVT-Ed team focusing on the Vermont Licensure Portfolio. The Vermont Licensure Portfolio is the portfolio that all ROPA-Approved programs require of their teacher

candidates. It addresses the ten Vermont Core Teaching Standards. The District Teacher Leads will support the development of the Peer Review Portfolio with a 10:1 ratio between new educators and District Teacher Leads. Seminars will occur throughout the year focusing on these standards, with Theme I and Theme III standards a strong focus in August and Theme II throughout the year. District Leads will assist in the planning of these seminars and meet with their smaller cohort regularly.

**Content Area Leads:** New educators in GrowVT-Ed will participate in content area seminars led by the Content Area Leads. These seminars will address the teaching competencies represented in the cohort. Of the thirty current NEK registrants, Special Education and Elementary Education represent two-thirds of the certification areas. All Content Leads will be practicing Vermont educators in the field and recognized for their expertise through National Board Certification or other recognition programs.

#### **Vermont-NEA Professional Programs Director and Professional Practice**

**Fellow:** Vermont-NEA has a full-time Fellow for the 22-23 school year. Together, Dr. Juliette Longchamp and the Fellow will lead this program and facilitate the work of the District and Content Area Leads. The 22-23 Fellow is a National Board Certified Special Educator who will be released from her classroom duties to work with Vermont-NEA.

**Timeline:** The GrowVT-Ed Academy will begin in August, 2022. After a five-day “jumpstart” experience, participants will attend weekly seminars that will focus on the Vermont Core Teaching Standards and Content Area Competencies. The instruction will be online with recordings to support those who are hired after the GrowVT-Ed Academy begins. The cohort will end in July, 2023 when it is expected all portfolios will be completed and submitted to the Agency of Education.

**Cost:** GrowVT-Ed will cost approximately \$722,000 for 150 teachers, or \$4800 per new educator. This includes payments for the mentors, District Leads, Content Area Leads, Peer Review Fee, and books and materials. Vermont-NEA will cover the cost of the Full-Time Fellow assigned to this project.

**Partnerships:** GrowVT-Ed is a collaboration between districts, Vermont-NEA, Vermont AOE Peer Review Coordinator, and Vermont State University-Castleton. Additional partners will emerge as Content Area Leads are recognized.

**Evaluation Metrics:** Vermont-NEA will apply Improvement Science to this project. Data that will be collected and analyzed in order to strengthen the program includes:

- Seminar Evaluations after each seminar
- Participant Surveys September, November, January, April and June
- Curriculum Director/Admin Surveys
- Number of GrowVT-Ed participants achieving Level I Certification through the Peer Review Process
- Number of GrowVT-Ed participants returning for Year Two

What I described is the basic structure of the program and would welcome feedback and questions.