

May 2021



Independent School Newsletter

Introduction:

Many Vermonters consider May to be one of the most frustrating months of the year. The promise of warmer, longer, more carefree days ahead is often at odds with the reality of lingering cold, dark, rainy days, and occasional snow showers. Those of us who garden, eagerly anticipate the perfect day to get out and start tilling the soil. This May Vermonters have a lot more to celebrate than the end of winter.

It seems we may be winning the initial battle with COVID and we can look forward to cautious social events with family and friends as evidenced by Governor Scott's bi-weekly press conferences.

All of Vermont's schools, both public and independent, have a lot to be proud of regarding their responses to educational disruptions caused by the pandemic. Schools have consistently found ways to provide access to nutrition programs and inventive ways to follow all guidelines to ensure as much in-person educational programming as possible.

Yet, there remains an exhausting amount of work to do to mitigate the lingering impact of the pandemic on education. Planning for the FY22 school year is already underway for integration of student social/emotional wellbeing and to address loss of learning grades K-12.

In the months ahead, this newsletter will be devoting time and attention to providing schools with specific information on professional development, community-based resources, and support from the Agency of Education.

There are so many reasons to be hopeful this May, thanks to the dedication of independent school staff.

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the AOE's independent school team for support at:

Pat.PallasGray@vermont.gov

Deborah.ormsbee@vermont.gov

The Independent School team encourages schools to submit newsletter suggestions or requests for technical assistance, by the first of each month to:

deborah.ormsbee@vermont.gov

In this issue:

- Program corrections
- GEER EANS Updates
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Program of the Month- INCLUSION-TABS

Newsletter Correction:

The February newsletter miscommunicated requirements regarding fire safety inspections.

The safety reminder stated that fire inspections must be conducted annually. However, only approved residential programs are required to schedule **annual** fire safety checks and must post the DFS Certificate within each residential building.

We apologize for the confusion.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." ~ Margaret Mead

A Few GEER EANS Reminders:

In the days ahead, the AOE will send to participating schools a template with instructions on how to report low-income student data.

Technical assistance for completing the forms will be available by contacting programing staff at:

AOE GEER EANS program team at the designated GEER EANS email:

AOE.GEEREANS@vermont.gov

Or to contact a member of the independent school team, please reach out to:

Deborah.ormsbee@vermont.gov

Professional Development Opportunities:

The Agency of Education regularly posts professional development opportunities that are also available to independent school staff and may be accessed through the agency's website.

Here are a few of the many interesting opportunities that may be accessed by going to:

Courtesy Posts

Assessment Over Coffee: A Five-Part Webinar Series with Melissa Farrall

Registration is open for [Assessment Over Coffee: A Five-Part Webinar Series with Melissa Farrall](#), offered by the Stern Center for Language and Learning. This webinar series is designed to add a little assessment excitement to your summer. Tune in to learn about why reading is so important, and why it is so hard for many students to become skilled readers and writers. Learn about the tools that literacy professionals use to identify dyslexia and dysgraphia, and how a comprehensive evaluation can be instrumental to providing effective, evidence-based instruction. Webinars run from 9-11 a.m. on Wednesdays from June 30 to July 28, 2021. Discounts available. Contact: SJ Larkspur at slarkspur@sterncenter.org

2021 Vermont Literacy Conference

The [2021 Vermont Literacy Conference](#) is happening Aug. 2-4, 2021. These three days will feature 10 different two-day strands, 7 Hot Topics to select from each day and two keynote speakers, Cornelius Minor and Jennifer Seravallo. Consider sending a team from your school or district to deepen their learning on supporting their students' literacy success. Attendees of this conference can be a part of follow-up work for three credits from Saint Michael's College if desired.

Contact: Mary Grace at info@pllv.org or (802) 828-0521.

Fostering Anti-Racist Classrooms Professional Development

The Center for Community & Social Justice at Champlain College is offering credit-bearing professional development for all Vermont PreK-12 educators. The Summer Institute for Educators: Fostering Anti-Racist Classrooms will be offered online from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., June 21 through June 25, 2021. This professional development opportunity will be led by local and national experts who will provide attendees with actionable suggestions for creating inclusive classrooms and classroom resources. Details and registration information can be found at the [Summer Institute for Educators: Fostering Anti-Racist Classrooms](#) website.

Contact: Patti Aldredge

at communitysocialjustice@champlain.edu



Featured Program of the Month- Howard Center's INCLUSION (TABS- Tutorial and Behavioral Services Program)



Program FAQs

- Approved as a tutorial by the State Board of Education in October 2019
- Part of Howard Center's network of therapeutic special education schools
- The tutorial serves a maximum of 3 students for up to 6 months
- Provides crisis intervention for grades K-5
- INCLUSION integrates student academic programming with Trauma informed education and PBIS
- MTSS & instruction in content area as part of best practice pedagogy
- Effective development of individualized learning plans
- Teaching staff have worked to develop evidence-based, best practice instruction methods for high needs students, in concert with implementing any LEA required curricula

A Conversation with INCLUSION Education Director, Kristie Reed:

AOE: The first year, for any new independent program is difficult even under pre-COVID circumstances. How has the INCLUSION- TABS program staff and students adjusted to education in a pandemic environment?

Kristie Reed: " March 15, 2020 will forever be a date imprinted in the Big World of Education in our small state of Vermont. It was on this day that Governor Phil Scott announced, "a continuity of Education Plan for the orderly dismissal of all school, no later than Wednesday March 18, 2020.

Creativity and commitment in supporting our students were already a staple of our services at the Howard Center, finding ways outside the box to support our students and their families became the everyday new normal in the Tutorial and Behavioral services program (TABS).

Our TABS village pulled up their sleeves, collaborated remotely and created a small miracle: Finding every way possible to support our students social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs.

We supported our students and families during a global pandemic by facilitating internet access and providing the technology needed for our students to access social, emotional and academic programming including supporting IEP goals; Facilitating food drop offs delivery to honor the free breakfast and lunch programs; Fostering therapeutic relationships and positive connections needed to maintain communication with our students every day."

To learn more about the INCLUSIONS-TAB program, contact program education director Kristie Reed at:

KristieR@howardcenter.org