

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN RURAL VERMONT

**Reflections and Highlights from VT Act 67 - The
Community Schools Act**

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Outline

1. VT Community Schools
 - Our Five Pillars
 - VT Act 67 Schools
2. Act 67 Evaluation Overview and Highlights
3. Reflections on Current Act 67 Community Schools Grant Awardees (2021-2024)
4. Community Schools Sustainability and Next Steps
 - AOE CS Funding
 - Catamount Community Schools Collaborative Funding

Community Schools in Vermont

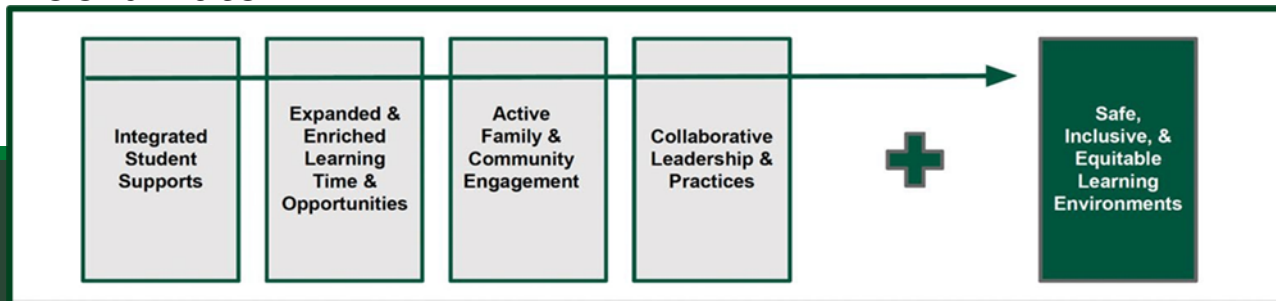
...are not singular programs or strategies. Rather, it represents a fundamental rethinking of how to deliver public education. *It's how we do school.*

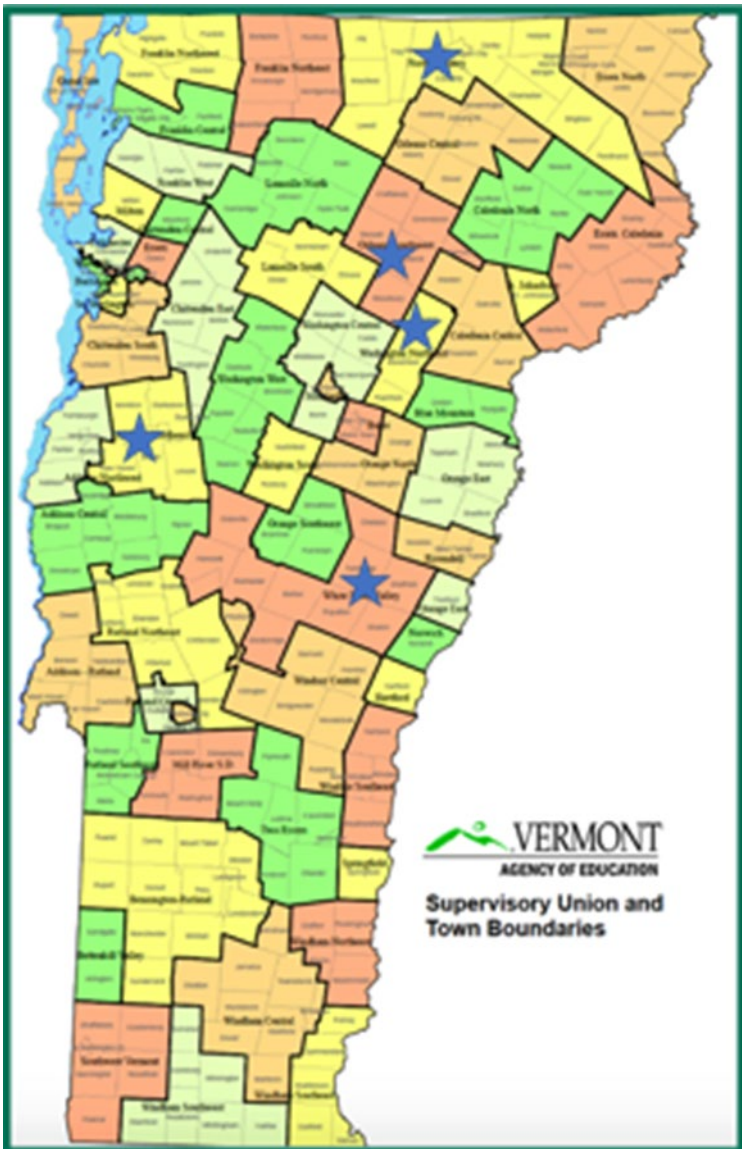
...align with Vermont's student-centered approach to learning and an existing regulatory framework for education.

...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.**

... and supported, organized and resourced by a Community School Coordinator





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)

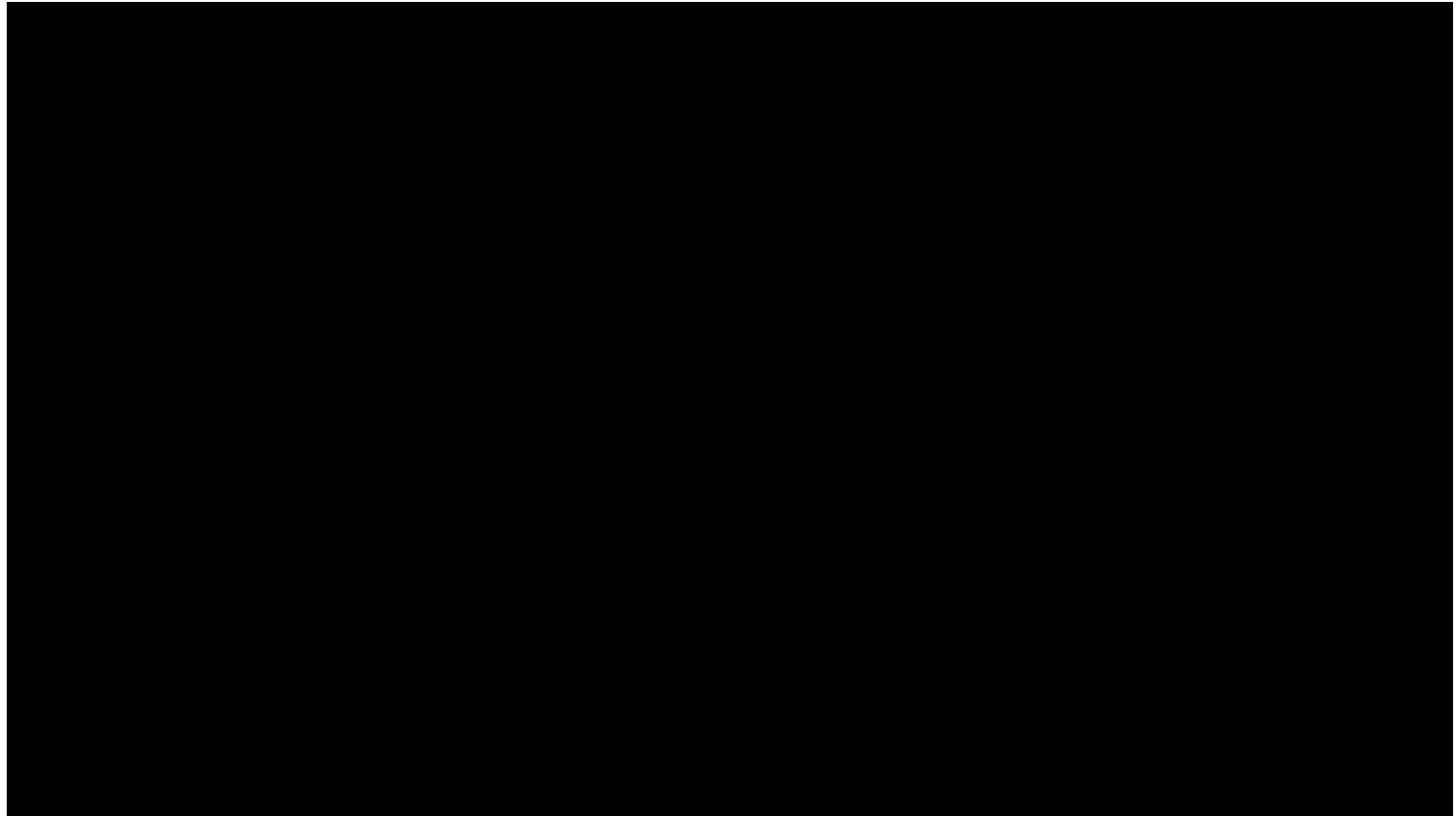
North Country Supervisory Union (10-districts)
PK-12, 12 schools, (N=2,684)

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

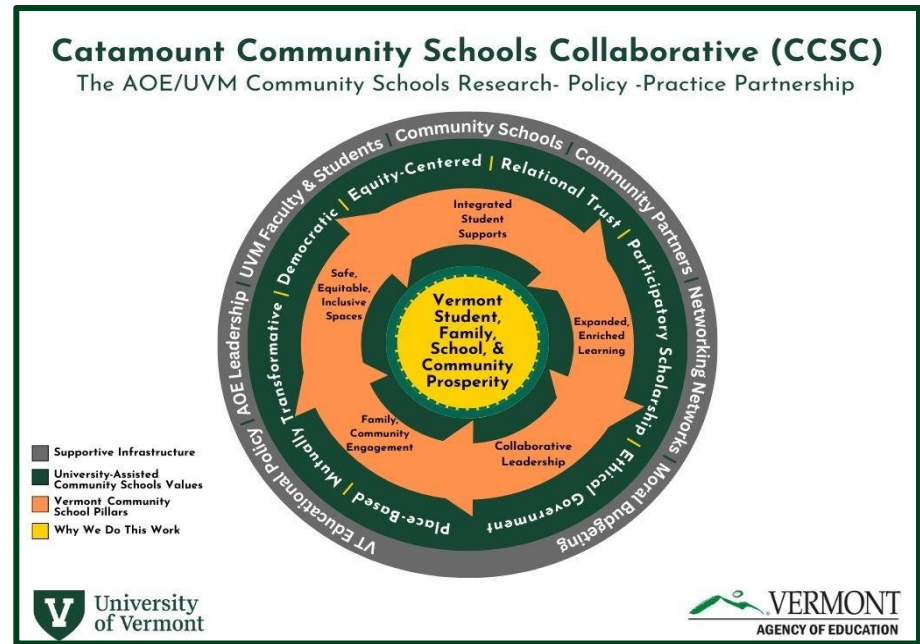
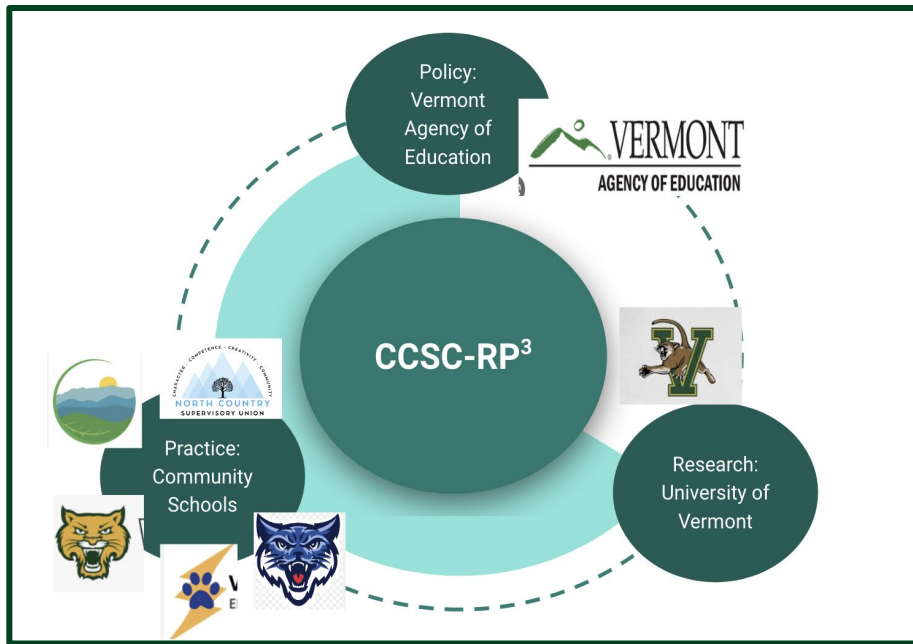
White River Valley Supervisory Union (5-districts)
White River Valley Middle School, 6-8, (N=132)

**Across Act 67 Community Schools, we are
supporting over 3,560 PK-12 students, their
families, and communities.**

VT Community Schools in Their Own Words



CATAMOUNT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH-POLICY-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP (CCSC-RP3)



RP3 to CCSC: Supportive Accountability

- Personalized reflection tools for each VT CS
- Quarterly check-in meetings with each CS Team
- Act 67 CS Cohort meetings
- Community School Site Visits
- Digital Storytelling
- End-of-year empathy interviews with each CS Lead Team
- Individual interviews with CS coordinators, principals, and superintendents
- Site specific logic models and evaluation tools



Addison Northwest
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Addison Northwest School District - Year 3 Community School Logic Model

INPUTS / RESOURCES	KEY ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES
<p>STATE LEVEL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VT Act 67 Funding • AOE-UVM Research Practice Partnership in Evaluation, Guidance • AOE Technical Assistance and Ongoing Support (Check-In Meetings, CSC Happenings, etc.) <p>SCHOOL/DISTRICT LEVEL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community School Coordinator • CSAC Home School Coordination and Mental Health Services Coordinator • Director of Student Services • Director of Learning • Coordinator of Equity & Inclusion • MTSS Teams • Local Healthcare Providers • School Principal Support and Engagement • Physical Space (e.g., school classrooms, gym/recreation facilities, and equipment) • Vergennes Department of Parks and Recreation • Bixby Library • Community Partner Involvement/Support • VT Community Garden • Hunger Free Vermont • 21C Funding/Grant Program • Community School Teams (P2C2/FYET) • Vergennes Recreation Department (VPRC) 	<p>INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student/Family Needs Matching Procedure Development, Add School Site to process • All school nurses adopt SNAP (school nurse electronic health record system) • Annual Health Progress Report Development • SEL Screener administration; SEL-informed PD • Expansion of MH services within MTSS • Food/Meals Resource Database Development, expansion • Van Rental for Food/Meal Delivery on Weekends, Holidays • Establish a self-selected program for meals • Meals Program Quarterly Progress Updates • Absenteeism Identification Procedures and Data Management w/ Quarterly Progress Reports • Community Partnership Presentations for Teachers • Anti-racism Presentations for Teachers • Offer garden space as a common space for families; Add indoor hydroponic growing system to the program • Identify families in need of Chromebooks; purchase Chromebook <p>EXPANDED/ENRICHED LEARNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded Afterschool Programming • Extend summer programming • Co-plan and develop early ed workshop series on racial learning • Hire Additional Staff for Afterschool • create a framework for sustainable mentoring program • Create job description for a mentor coordinator • Monthly Community Partner Meetings • Initiations to 10 new partners and state representatives • Expand VPRC Offerings • Collaborate on a plan for installation of a permanent story walk in the community <p>ACTIVE FAMILY/COMM. ENGAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Literacy Support needs through data analysis. • Presentation of literacy data; Partner with the local library to support community literacy • Position school building as a community learning space; Create Community School messaging <p>COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee mentorship program; partner with VPRC, VCS; facilitate community schools work • VCS attends the Rowland Conference • Design and facilitate professional development that responds to the literacy and math progress monitoring • Design pre/post questionnaire for use after presentations; Hold 4-6 team group meetings <p>SAFE, INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-evaluate curriculum; Develop an action plan to begin addressing variability, cohesion issues • Provide DEI PD to teachers and support staff • Triannual monitoring of benchmark and summative assessment data 	<p>INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Chromebooks & 3 Tablets to support 8 families • MTSS Team meeting reports • Kindergarten Chicken Care program w/ established volunteers • Harvest Fest • 6 Classes using hydroponic system • Lettuce in School Meals program • All classrooms participated in seed starting activity • SV/SW attendance data • Edulcimer database available • Students identified vulnerable • MTSS referrals to address attendance • Timely/accurate notifications to families re: attendance • Food security questionnaire sent home to all families • Database of community-wide resources related to food security • Mental Health Services available (within 4-6 wks) to youth • Spring panorama survey data and analysis <p>EXPANDED/ENRICHED LEARNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Story Walk • 3 additional AS activities; ski and ride program (K-12), community dinner project, and bike repair • SEL Screener data w/ afterschool • 8 added expanded learning providers/offerings w/ Quarterly report • Established mentoring partnership(s) Framework • Enhanced VPRC offerings and access • Mentor Coord. hired <p>ACTIVE FAMILY/COMM. ENGAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol for educators to use when reviewing academic screener • Data-driven decision making PD for teachers • Expanded literacy education for community • 5 workshops w/ community partners w/ Childcare <p>COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased mentors; Community Connection plan • List of books with SEL transferable skills learning connections • Monthly CS Theme based partnership meetings • CS presentation and timeline of implementation; Data from pre/post questionnaire re: CS knowledge • Math and Literacy walk-through tool • Action plan for all screenings • Layer 1 Instruction Strengthened • Culturally Responsive Curriculum • DEI PD to all teachers and support staff 	<p>INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to health and wellness services for 40% of students and families in need with area health care providers • Decrease in time between referral and service delivery • 5% decrease in student absenteeism and school health office visits • Reduction in behavioral interventions and disciplinary incidents • Staff/students report increased feeling of safety • Increased educator efficacy/effectiveness using student data • 40% of students and families in need matched with area health care providers • Decrease family food insecurity • Majority of participants look forward to the foods each week • 10% reduction in absences; 5% student participation in the mentoring program <p>EXPANDED/ENRICHED LEARNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased attendance in AS program first-time participants • Reduction in absenteeism • Increased student belonging • 25% increase of new participants in AS activities • Reduction in disproportionate discipline rates for students of color • Enhanced access to SEL information <p>ACTIVE FAMILY/COMM. ENGAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% of ANWSD families will participate in at least one literacy workshop • Food Access/Relief improves • Student Absenteeism decreases • Increased Academic Success <p>COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater understanding of community schools work • Increased community connections with conference attendees. • Increased educator efficacy using data <p>SAFE, INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased feeling of student belongingness • Math/Literacy scores increase 5% • Social emotional/behavioral referrals reduced by 8% • Reduced absenteeism • Heightened student performance all around • Reduced opportunity gap between subgroups
<p>COMMUNITY SCHOOL ASSUMPTIONS</p> <p>Community schools <u>meet the unique needs of students and families</u> and build on the assets they bring to their schools and communities.</p> <p>Community schools <u>serve as resource hubs</u> that provide a broad range of easily accessed, well-coordinated supports and services.</p> <p>Community schools are <u>important centers for building community connection</u> and resilience.</p> <p>Community schools <u>combine challenging and culturally inclusive learning opportunities</u> with the academic and social supports every student needs to reach their potential.</p>			



VERMONT
AGENCY OF EDUCATION

Research Guided by Implementation Science



1) What are the experiences of new community school sites in implementing key organizational structures of the community school model? ([Fehrer, 2016](#)).



2) How has the funding support from the Vermont community school Act enabled awardees to create and implement community school vision?

2A) How are community schools integrating existing school-based systems of support and academic enrichment with new priority areas surfaced from the community school needs assessment and prioritization?



3) What are the preliminary outcomes of CS implementation in Vermont CS schools supported through the Vermont community School Act?

2021-2022

Staffing and structural support for CS, Needs/Asset mapping, assessing readiness, community partnerships, Hiring, MOUs, Building ownership and capacity, CS leadership and mindset

2022-2023

Pillar implementation, Cross pillar work. Peer to peer sharing, crystalizing focus, de-implementation of strategies not working, PDSA cycles in action

2023-2024

Scaling and expansion, Sustainability of CSC, School board advocacy, Expanding CS work across SU/SD. Collective Efficacy, Local Capacity for Problem Solving, Preliminary Outcome Exploration, Organizational readiness

Student-Centered/Deeper Learning

Deeper Learning (Cabot, Senior X, Bike Share,)

“I learned that I have a particular knack for community service: having a job or doing something that benefits other people in some way makes me feel like my job or service is important.”

- Senior X Student



Hazen Union Middle/High School students participate in a locally-grown bike build and repair program, housed in Hazen Union High School.

Intergenerational Learning (Mobile Arts; Play Group; ABAR)



Reading to Raise Anti-Racists, 2022-2023 - Ferrisburgh & Vergennes Union Elementary Schools

Increased Access to Health & Wellness

Educator Wellness

Food Security

- OneGrocery in NCSU
- Vergennes Meal Program & school gardens, hydroponic lettuce
- Expanding food pantries in WRVSU

School based health services

- Telehealth/SBHC at Hazen
- Health Fairs and Community Workshops
- Primary Care Partnerships



Vergennes Elementary students participating in food systems learning via the CS garden, food delivery, & volunteering at the local food pantry.

Community Resiliency and Connection



"I think that the atmosphere here really allows for that to be able to have honest meaningful conversations with kids outside of the school. "I think a lot of people in the community....they are making their self available to the school and the school is allowing that. There is back and forth and it's appreciating. It's not like the door is shut and the community can't get in."

- Town manager

Recipe for Connection,
Hazen HS 11/23 at Hardwick
United Church

"The class has lumped together all sorts of people who may not otherwise have an opportunity to connect, and in doing so, has created unique bonds and moments of collaboration."

- Hazen HS student

- Restorative Truancy
- Community Mentoring
- Restorative Practices
- Project Based Learning
- Comprehensive Supports

"My student is now at school more and attends on days when we do not have available busing. I am seeing huge developmental growth in this student due to consistent attendance, all thanks to the support of restorative truancy."

- Early Childhood Educator



Become a Vergennes MENTOR



RESEARCH SHOWS MENTORING SUCCESSFULLY

- Promotes self respect
- Increases school attendance
- Enhances self-esteem and confidence
- Increases student academic success
- Increases healthier relationships, lifestyle choices



Successful Integration and Coherence

- 80% of CS invested in 25 MTSS strategies
- 100% of CS invested in 17 CBO
- 100% of CS invested in 13 CBL strategies and 60% of CS invested in 5 WBL
- 100% of CS invested in 17 strategies to support CHE/ Health and Wellness
- 100% of CS invested in 14 strategies to support MH/counseling & SEL strategies
- 100% of CS invested in 15 strategies to support youth voice and student agency
- 80% of CS invested in 24 equity literacy strategies; 100% invested in 9 strategies to support culturally inclusive/sustaining
- 100% invested in 12 connected literacy strategies (e.g., Civic Literacy, Financial Literacy, Media/Digital Literacy and Literacy)

Socially Significant Outcomes

Three years of Community Schools implementation in rural Vermont has had significant impact and led to several socially significant outcomes...

1. Academic, Social, and Behavioral Development for Students

- a. VT Comprehensive Assessment Programs show Significant Progress in ELA and Math, Behavioral Incidents and Class Removals Decreased (e.g., White River Valley SU CAP scores, Hazen Union School disciplinary referral records)

2. Mutually Beneficial School-Community Connection; Contributions to Local Workforce, Economy

- a. Project-based and Work-based Learning programs in connection with local nonprofits, town management, and parks/recreation departments (e.g., Hazen Union School bike repair, connection to local trails management and development)

Academics	Behavioral	Staff Recruitment / Retention	Student Engagement	Family/Community Engagement
<p>WRVSU 72% of 10th graders achieved the national benchmark in reading; 61% of 11th graders proficient or exceeding on spring science VTCAP (AY23/24)</p> <p>Cabot School 100% participation in SeniorX Capstone Project-Based Learning Program (AY23/24)</p> <p>NCSU 30 students with disabilities developed food preparation skills</p>	<p>Hazen Union School 50% reduction in absenteeism in grade nine over the past three years</p> <p>WRVSU 7% decrease in the number of referrals (AY22-23 to AY23-24)</p> <p>NCSU Student participation in Restorative Truancy Program grew from 12 (AY21/22), to 17 (AY22/23, to over 25 (AY 23/24), ALL seeing a reduction in absenteeism</p>	<p>Hazen Union School 100% Staff Retention (AY 22/23 & 23/24)</p> <p>Cabot 100% staff retention in elementary grades (AY 22/23 & 23/24)</p> <p>WRVSU “I’ve never been in this kind of a school, this position where there are far more brilliant ideas waiting to become fruit than I’ve ever experienced before.” - Pierre LaFlamme, Principal, WRVMS</p>	<p>NCSU 78 students participate in dental screenings/necessary procedures in AY 23/24 with 802 Smiles partnership.</p> <p>WRVSU Student ridership through TriValley Transit partnership increased from approx. 8/week to over 45/week; Continues to provide needed transport for over 40% of students participating in afterschool clubs/activities.</p> <p>Cabot School Over 50% in grades 1-6 and 25% in grades 7-12 participate in AfterSchool Program.</p>	<p>NCSU 220 attendees over 10 weeks of the Art VanGO! with 102 unique visitors</p> <p>Vergennes Elementary 10 unique community mentors contributing 172 hours of mentoring to elementary students under 10y.o. AY 23/24</p> <p>WRVSU Over 100 community member attended Understand Food Insecurity Community Dinner. Raised over \$700 for Bethel food shelf.</p>

Community School Scalability & Expansion...

- Average 10 state-level supports per awardee/year (AI educator training, Cyber Response Planning, Literacy and Data Literacy training, STEAM learning, etc.) and combined investment value of \$2.63M in expanded and enriched learning funding through alternate state grants
- Transformed a \$3M ESSER 3-year investment into \$2.375M private and federally funded effort (nearly doubled)
- House Education Committee drafted bill and proposed \$1.9M state investment*
- Act 67 Schools building from Portrait of a Graduate, contributing to Portrait of a VT Community School; 3 LEAs have integrated some or all of their CS work into their local budgets
- From 16 community schools to a growing 28 community schools; Expansion occurring within district/supervisory union, as well as externally.
- From 3,500 students served/supported to 5,223
- ROI Community School Coordinator

Next Steps and Future Commitments

- VT State Legislature Funding (2024)
 - Sustainability Grants
 - Foundational Grants
- Catamount Community School Collaborative (CCSC) Support, Technical Assistance, Funding
 - Continued partnership through CS Research-Policy-Practice Partnership (RP3) with AOE, VT Community Schools
 - Connection to UVM resources, expertise (e.g., faculty, students, national networks, external funding)
- Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships
- Vermont Rural Education Collaborative
- Community Schools Cohort/Network Establishment
 - Developing a community of practice, state-wide network of support and peer mentorship
 - Dissemination of CS process evaluation tools (logic models, needs assessment, monitoring tools)