

Over 400 Educators Participate in Building Effective Strategies for Teaching Students (BEST) Institute

Montpelier - The 14th Annual BEST* Summer Institute was attended for the second year by a sold-out crowd.

Kevin Jennings, Assistant Deputy Secretary of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-free Schools, delivered the keynote address on June 24. Jennings was appointed by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in July 2009 as Assistant Deputy Secretary to head the Office of Safe and Drug-free Schools. Kevin is the first career educator to hold this position and brings to this role 25 years of experience, as a teacher, a writer and a leader in the fields of K-12 education and civil rights.

The event, held at the Killington Grand Resort in Killington Vermont, attracted over 400 educators to four days of strands on topics such as Positive Behavior Supports for School Leadership Teams, Brain-based Strategies for an Improved Adolescent Learning Environment, and Classroom Strategies for Building Social, Emotional and Behavioral Competence. These educators voluntarily extended their school year to come together in school teams to work on building supports for effective teaching.

Twenty percent of Vermont schools were represented, and over 30 percent of the schools attending were furthering their work on implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (VTPBiS), a framework designed to provide consistent systems of support for all students and focused preventive strategies to help students with more intensive needs develop skills they can exercise independently. The goal is reducing the need for dependence on one-to-one aides or alternative settings. Currently Vermont has over 70 schools working in this framework.

- For more information, visit http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_safeschools.html#best, or contact Richard Boltax at (802) 828-5125.
- [Photo of Kevin Jennings, Assistant Deputy Secretary of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-free Schools, attached]
- *Building Effective Strategies for Teaching Students with Behavioral Challenges (BEST) Project

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