



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
**EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES**

# **43<sup>rd</sup> Vermont Outstanding Educator Day**

**Tuesday, November 14, 2023**

“Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be.”

- Rita Pierson, Educator

***Presented in collaboration with the  
Vermont Agency of Education***





43<sup>rd</sup>

VERMONT  
OUTSTANDING  
EDUCATOR DAY

&

VT AGENCY OF  
EDUCATION  
2024 TEACHER  
OF THE YEAR  
RECOGNITION

NOVEMBER 14, 2023



## Schedule of Events

Welcome and Introductions  
UVM College of Education  
and Social Services  
Dean Katie Shepherd

Recognition of  
Outstanding Educators  
Vermont National  
Education Association  
Vice President Erin Carter

Recognition of Outstanding  
Educators and 2024 Vermont  
Teacher of the Year  
Vermont Agency of  
Education Director of the  
Student Support Service  
Division Meg Porcella

Keynote Speaker  
Robyn Newton, Vergennes  
Union Elementary School,  
2023 Vermont Teacher of the Year

Presentation of 2023  
Outstanding Educator Awards  
UVM Department of Education  
Chairperson Kimberly Vannest,  
UVM Director of Community  
Collaboration Katie Revelle,  
and UVM Director of Educator  
Licensure Programs  
Patrick Halladay

Closing Remarks  
Dean Katie Shepherd



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*"Teachers, I believe, are the most responsible and important members of society because their professional efforts affect the fate of the earth."*

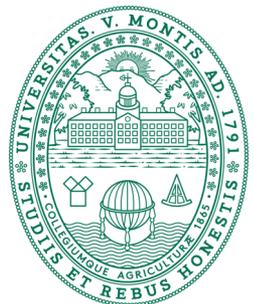
-Helen Caldicott, author and peace activist

Dear Outstanding Educators,

Welcome to the UVM College of Education and Social Services' 43<sup>rd</sup> annual Outstanding Educator Day. This is a day to honor Vermont's Outstanding Educators, including the 2024 Teacher of the Year. We thank you for allowing us to publicly honor you today for educating the next generation of Vermont students. Each day, you help them to develop skills and to become more creative and humane. Today we gather to recognize the long hours, patience, perseverance, and passion defining your important work. We honor your commitment, your successes as well as your trials, and the powerful impact you have had on the children of Vermont and our future. Thank you for your service and your inspiration to all of us. You make a great difference every day, and we appreciate all that you do.

Best Regards,

Katharine G. Shepherd  
Dean  
College of Education and Social Services  
[https://www.uvm.edu/cess/doe/  
outstanding-educator-awards-and-  
vermont-teacher-year](https://www.uvm.edu/cess/doe/outstanding-educator-awards-and-vermont-teacher-year)





### **Laura Aghajanian**

#### **Mettawee Community School, Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union**

Laura has been a speech language pathologist with us since 2002. She is an outstanding SLP, case manager, and colleague. She does an outstanding job informing parents on how their children are doing with her speech and language session. She takes the time talking with parents to engage them in their child's education. Laura is a strong leader in our special education department and many classroom teachers work closely with her to help support their students.

### **Marcia Bender**

#### **Woodstock Union Middle and High Schools, Windsor Central Supervisory Union**

Ms. Bender is the director of the YOH Theater and teacher at Woodstock Union Middle and High Schools. Marcia's work in theater/performing arts has been incredibly instrumental in helping students begin to understand the value of practice, experiment, process, and consistent hard work over time to achieve a performance level. She challenges students with rigorous texts, important and sometimes hard connections, and teaches them the power of joy at every turn, and with every discovery and accomplishment.

### **David Bensel**

#### **Bakersfield Elementary and Middle School, Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union**

David is someone who cares for every student in his classroom and is committed to their growth. David knows his curriculum well, and knows his students even better, which allows him to follow the students' lead to personalize opportunities in order to accelerate their learning. David is patient and understanding with his students and is dedicated to building strong relationships with each of them. He understands the importance of belonging and the value of relationships and connection.

### **Jen Bickel-Hayes**

#### **Champlain Valley Union High School, Champlain Valley School District**

Jen takes responsibility for the students who she most directly serves, and works tirelessly meeting their educational and mental health needs. She manages the school's Naviance system, communicates with families, helps coordinates with transfer students, while squeezing in more students than her schedule physically allows - and all with a smile on her face. She makes every student feel seen, heard, and cared for. Jen cares about her work, the people she serves, and the systems she oversees.

### **Kari Bohlen**

#### **John F. Kennedy Elementary School, Winooski School District**

Kari is an engaging educator & committed team member that not only makes deep connections with her current students but also maintains them. She is an advocate that strives to make Winooski the best place for the entire community. She works to ensure that every voice is heard while striving to understand how she can be an advocate and ally for all.

### **Laurie Bolotin**

#### **Central Elementary School, Windham Northeast Supervisory Union**

Laurie is a special educator with a passion for helping all. She works closely with families so they feel welcomed, safe, and supported. Laurie makes sure to have a personal connection. She takes much time to go step by step over each IEP, and ensures that students and families know about available resources and offers assistance, if needed. She is the first to share in successes and celebrate along with them, or is very empathic and supportive when there is sad news. She brings her guitar and sings with classes. On cross-grade level days, students are so excited to be her group; they know they are sure to sing, dance, and have a great time. Laurie is a free spirit with love to give to one and all, and we appreciate all that she does to support our school and community.

### **Zachary "Ollie" Brown**

#### **Rutland Middle School, Rutland City School District**

Ollie service Rutland Middle School as a technology integration coach. He worked with the summer school teachers to help implement a project based plan that had students capturing historic images on 360 degree cameras, researching the historic people referenced, and creating virtual tours. Ollie is teaching our students and staff to use cutting edge technologies to learn in all of their curricular areas. He represents the future of where education will be headed.

### **Christine Callahan**

#### **Camels Hump Middle School, Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District**

Christine is a dedicated, collaborative, and experienced special educator. Christine's ability to connect with all students, create equitable and inclusive learning environments, and facilitate anti-bias/anti-racist workshops has made a positive impact on our school. Christine's commitment to our educational support team, leadership, mentor, and ABAR groups has been influential. Christine's contributions go far beyond her teaching role and we are lucky to have such a remarkable teacher/leader.

### **Patrick Clow**

#### **Georgia Elementary and Middle School, Franklin West Supervisory Union**

Patrick is always looking to improve or expand opportunities for students, and to that end, he frequently challenges the status quo. He has put a great deal of effort into supporting teachers, advocating for students, implementing various technologies, and designing curriculum. He has implemented personal learning opportunities in the Georgia Elementary and Middle School Innovation lab as well as his partnerships with other teachers. This work always takes into account what each student needs in order to be successful.

### **Lindsay Davis**

#### **Irasburg Village School, Orleans Central Supervisory Union**

Lindsay has served the Orleans Central SU for thirteen years as the middle level science teacher at the Irasburg Village School and Brownington Central School. She is a strong leader and a consistent source of support for her students and fellow teachers. In addition to demonstrating her skills as a progressive, student-centered educator, she took on a wide range of responsibilities this past year to help her colleagues, students and district continue to thrive.

### **Tabitha Davis**

#### **Tinmouth Elementary School, Mill River Unified Union School District**

Tabitha is an elementary teacher who is quiet, humble, and tends to fly under the radar, but the moment you speak to her or walk into her classroom, you see the fantastic learning happening and hear her passion. Tabitha is a champion for students, research-based practices and continuous growth. She deserves to be recognized for the huge, silent waves she is making in our children's and colleagues' lives.

### **Edward Dechen**

#### **Rutland Intermediate School, Rutland City School District**

Ed is an exceptional elementary math teacher who goes above and beyond to create meaningful connections with his students while fostering a love for mathematics. Ed has a remarkable ability to build strong relationships with his students. This personal touch creates a classroom environment where students feel safe to take risks and ask questions, ultimately leading to increased engagement and confidence in math.

### **Jeremy Demink**

#### **Edmunds Middle School, Burlington School District**

Jeremy is a dedicated, passionate educator who has made a significant impact on our school community. One of his most notable achievements is his initiation of the Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) program. It is a program that empowers students to use research to address issues they care about. He is creative and innovative in his teaching methods. He is always looking for ways to engage students. He is a student-centered teacher who is constantly learning and evolving.

### **Dedra Dolan**

#### **Johnson Elementary School, Lamoille North Unified School District**

Multiple generations of Johnson children have been fortunate enough to have Dedra as their teacher. Although her students learn to read, write, and count while in her class, the most important lessons she imparts on them are about how they can be part of a classroom and school community. Dedra's students learn to be kind to each other, to wait their turn, and to be respectful of each other. The great work she does every year makes the job of our first through sixth grade teachers much easier.

### **Adrienne D'Olimpio**

#### **Lake Region Union High School, Orleans Central Supervisory Union**

Adrienne is a talented teacher who challenges students to be their best. For thirty years she has traveled to Mexico with students providing opportunities for them to study the history and culture of the Yucatan peninsula. Students and colleagues respect her for setting a high bar for students and for helping students find ways to exceed expectations. She also serves as the coordinator of supervisory union's mentoring program, producing a cadre of thoughtful, reflective teaching professionals.

### **Moira Donovan**

#### **Peoples Academy, Lamoille South Unified Union School District**

After more than thirty years of teaching, Moira continues to inspire her students and peers. As a strong advocate for students of all abilities, she seeks innovative ways to encourage her students to push themselves academically and personally, helping them to achieve what they are truly capable of even when they don't think they can. Moira is a role model of professionalism and a key player in making Peoples Academy a place to celebrate.

### **Molly Dubois**

#### **Crossett Brook Middle School, Harwood Unified Union School District**

Molly goes above and beyond to meet the needs of her music students each and every day. She strives to create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space for every individual that comes into her room. She designs opportunities for students to explore their individual interests as well as their collective endeavors as part of a group. Her enthusiasm and excitement for music and music education makes coming into her class a joy each and every time.

### **Stacey Dunham**

#### **Hartford Area Career and Technology Center, Hartford School District**

Stacey is helpful, knowledgeable, kind, she genuinely cares about her students and teammates, and is always working to make the Hartford Area Career and Technology Center a better place with the many hats she wears at the tech center such as being a Mentor, FBLA Advisor and our HEA rep. In addition she runs her classroom not only during class time but asynchronously as well, which helps students earn their hours.

### **Ryan Dunlea**

#### **Spaulding High School, Barre Unified Union School District**

Ryan is an outstanding human who welcomes students into his classroom every day, meets them where they are at, and supports them with compassion, empathy, and encouragement. He comes in early, stays late, gives up his night and weekends, and sprinkles coaching on top. His commitment to his students and his craft are commendable, and we should all strive to meet the standard he sets.

### **Rebecca Emerson**

#### **Twinfield Union School, Caledonia Central Supervisory Union**

Rebecca is a dedicated teacher who works hard to meet the needs of all students. She supports students as they transition into kindergarten and creates a safe and positive learning environment. She connects with families and helps to ease the transition. She advocates for students and staff, and she is always willing to take time to answer questions and help problem solve. Rebecca has made her mark on Twinfield and Twinfield is a better school for it.

### **Paige Emory**

#### **Stowe Middle School, Lamoille South Unified Union School District**

Since she began at Stowe Middle School in 2005, Paige has committed herself to supporting her students and finding strategies that will benefit their daily needs. She collaborates with faculty and staff demonstrating the desire to use resources that aid her in giving her students the best possible outcome. Paige is a strong leader who communicates well with others, is not afraid to take on additional responsibilities, and is undoubtedly deserving of this award.

### **Steve Forman**

#### **Randolph Union Middle High School, Orange Southwest Unified School District**

Steve is an educator who students acknowledged in their nominations of him as a teacher with an unfaltering belief in every student to learn. Whether he is working with students in an advisory capacity or in the classroom he meets students where they are at and helps them develop as learners and self advocates. Steve is uniquely able to set limits and hold students accountable while bringing a sense of joy to learning.

### **Susan Galipeault**

#### **Lyndon Town School, Kingdom East School District**

For eighteen years Ms. Galipeault has inspired and challenged the children of Lyndon Town School. She takes every child's unique learning characteristics and helps them expand their curiosity and personal strengths, helping them to grow as readers, writers, and unique individuals. Her compassion, caring, and genuine concern for others transforms the culture around her, and she inspires youth and adults to pursue their talents and interests, becoming better versions of themselves.

### **Sarah Gallagher**

#### **Barstow Memorial School, Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union**

Sarah is Barstow's talented middle school math teacher. One of her superpowers is making students feel connected and cared for. She pushes students to their highest potential while giving them a soft landing spot. The atmosphere she creates for learning is one of a growth mindset, where she offers her students choice in their learning and skillfully guides them to push themselves through elaborate expressions of their learning.

### **Ross Greene**

#### **The Warren School, Harwood Unified Union School District**

Ross Greene is in his seventh year of teaching physical education. He has brought our school unabashed love for traditional sports and outdoor recreation, creating a physical education program that is contemporary, diverse, and beloved by each and every student in the school. His individualized instruction is infused with compassion, positivity and student accountability. And, his professional commitment to our professional community is exemplary.

### **Elizabeth Hahr**

#### **Robinson Elementary School, Mount Abraham Unified School District**

Beth has been an outstanding educator for three decades, recently specializing in math in grades 3/4. Students who enter Beth's class typically emerge at the end of the year achieving well over a year's growth in math. In the SEL realm, Beth uses restorative practices to build classroom community. She is known for her love of children, her highly effective use of differentiated curriculum, her collaboration with coaches and teaching partners and her trusted leadership role on the faculty.

### **Katherine Hill**

#### **Thetford Elementary School, Orange East Supervisory Union**

Katherine is an exceptional educator who possesses valuable skills and qualities for teaching in a multi-age classroom setting. Katherine's ability to differentiate instruction is particularly commendable. In a multi-age classroom, students often have varying levels of knowledge, skills, and learning styles. By tailoring her teaching methods to suit each student's needs, Katherine ensures that all students are challenged appropriately and can progress at their own pace.

### **Stephanie Hurley**

#### **Milton Elementary School, Milton Town School District**

Steph has demonstrated a consistent joyous approach to teaching and working with her students and colleagues this school year. Steph is patient, kind, and hardworking, and considerately works to ensure the needs of all her students are met. She has a huge heart and cares immensely about the each of her student's growth as learners as well as social and emotional needs.

### **Mike Janiszyn**

#### **Springfield High School, Springfield School District**

Mr. Janiszyn has complete dedication to teaching and is a national board certified. Mike has impacted so many people's lives positively. He is kind, caring, and supportive and goes above and beyond to connect with everyone he comes into contact with. Mike is an incredible role model in and out of the classroom. He creates engaging lessons relevant to our students' lives and has grown the high school newspaper to include the local television station.

### **Brian Japp**

#### **Center for Technology, Essex, Essex Westford Educational Community Unified Union School District**

Brian exudes enthusiasm for life, for teaching, for his relationships with students and colleagues. Brian's facility with instructional content combined with his innate ability to reach each student, makes him an exceptional candidate for Outstanding Educator.

## **Angela Kunkel**

### **Vergennes Union Middle and High School, Addison Northwest School District**

Angela is a fantastic librarian, who teaches classes, supports colleagues in writing curricula with an anti-bias, anti-racist lens, updates books and resources, and creates a safe and engaging environment in her educational spaces. She is reflective in her practice while taking care of the details and having the skill of stepping back and looking at the big picture. She cares about all students receiving a strong education in all their classes. We are lucky to have her on our team.

## **Stacey Ladd**

### **Burlington Technical Center, Burlington School District**

Stacey has been teaching in the Health Sciences Academy at the Burlington Technical Center since 2018. Her nomination is rooted in her decades' long background as a medical professional, and her expertise as an educator. She has the energy and skills to hold students to the highest academic standards. Through an intense curriculum, including several embedded college credits, her students often remark that their grades have gone up in all of their classes as a result of study skills and mentoring that Ms. Ladd teaches on a daily basis.

## **Natalie LaRose**

### **Porters Point School, Colchester School District**

Natalie teaches second grade at Porters Point School. She builds a strong classroom community that positively impacts the achievement, growth, and leadership skills of her students annually. She creates learning experiences that are individualized and engaging. She removes barriers that impact student success. From providing extra winter recess gear for students to her work on the school's Social-Emotional Learning and Behavior team, Natalie's work makes a difference in our school community!

## **Jennifer Letourneau**

### **Essex High School, Essex Westford Educational Community Unified Union School District**

Jen's dedication to supporting every student is evident in her high standards, continuous improvement, and individualized approach. She creates a welcoming and supportive classroom environment where all students feel valued and cared for, regardless of their abilities. Jen excels in creating classroom routines that support social-emotional learning and executive functioning. Her unparalleled commitment to inclusive, supportive learning environments is a model for her colleagues.

## **Nick Lodge**

### **Johnson Elementary School, Lamoille North Unified School District**

Nick creates a wonderful sense of community in his classroom every year. Beginning with the class constitution they create, all students and educators in the classroom have a voice as they grow close as a learning community throughout the year. Rather than sending students to the office for misbehavior, the class community processes these situations together using Restorative Practice circles. It is no surprise that years later his students still remember him as their favorite teacher.

### **Caitlin MacLeod-Bluver**

#### **Winooski High School, Winooski School District**

Caitlin is one of those teachers that you dream that your child would get the chance to learn from in their high school career. Her commitment to her students is genuine and heartfelt. Her understanding of structure and support benefits students in ways that empowers them to take the reins of their learning. Caitlin believes in her students and works with them to develop skills that are essential to helping them achieve their life goals.

### **Lisa Maggio**

#### **Middlebury Union Middle School, Addison Central School District**

Lisa brings exceptional energy to the school and has built a vibrant, inviting classroom. She encourages and guides each student to stretch and explore their creativity and is committed to their growth. As a colleague, Lisa is a master of interdisciplinary teaching and learning. She seeks out collaboration to develop interdisciplinary units that help students build connections across disciplines and she supports colleagues through complex challenges with humor and compassion.

### **Lisa Marchinkoski**

#### **The Dorset School, Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union**

Lisa has been a speech language pathologist with us since 1998. She is unfailingly positive, helpful and completely student centered. Lisa is the go to person for students who need help with social skills. She is always ready to help a colleague, keeping what's best for kids in mind. Her ability to listen and to give students the tools with which to communicate their feelings helps them to feel more in control. She is an outstanding teacher and colleague!

### **Carla Mayo**

#### **Mount Abraham Union Middle/High School, Mount Abraham Unified School District**

For over thirty years, Carla still welcomes her students with love and contagious laughter. She illuminates their lives and unique stories while maximizing and differentiating math education for everybody. Diverse teaching strategies and an emotionally safe, vibrant culture further inspire all learners. Through coaching, mentoring, co teaching, and her VMI (Vermont Mathematics Initiative) expertise she shares her wisdom with the Mount Abraham community.

### **Jennifer McConnell**

#### **Franklin Central School, Missisquoi Valley School District**

Jennifer McConnell has created an exemplary music program for our pre-k to 6th grade students. She goes far above and beyond to help students share their musical talents at many school and town events, even creating virtual concerts during COVID! The sheer number of students who choose to participate in band and chorus attests to the learning environment that Jen creates. When students say they don't want to miss school because "it's a music day" you know you've got a music teacher who's special!

### **Staci McDougall**

#### **Ottauquechee School, Hartford School District**

As a third grade classroom teacher at the Ottauquechee School, Staci excels at reaching students both academically and socially, and she goes above and beyond as a colleague and mentor. Staci consistently sees the strengths in every single learner and effectively builds upon them. She facilitates an exemplary student-led classroom and is exceptionally creative in adapting lessons. Students, families and colleagues appreciate that her class is organized, engaging and fun.

### **Katie McIntyre**

#### **Union Memorial School, Colchester School District**

Katie a special educator at Union Memorial School is an inspirational and highly effective educator! She has amazing skills in both the academic and social-emotional aspects of student learning. Katie supports colleagues and students through her incredible work ethic, knowledge of what motivates students and her ability to provide specific feedback in a way that is heard and appreciated. She coordinates the summer learning program, and her leadership skills made it a huge success!

### **Julie McKinstry**

#### **Doty Memorial School, Washington Central Unified Union School District**

Julie is a compassionate and dedicated teacher who prioritizes respect, empathy, and learning in her classroom. She goes above and beyond to understand and support struggling students and navigates difficult conversations with families skillfully. Julie is always eager to grow and develop as an educator, and her positive attitude is a valuable asset to the Doty community.

### **Shannan Mead**

#### **Castleton Elementary School, Slate Valley Unified School District**

Shannan Mead has been with our district for seventeen years. She has run an alternative program with some of our district's most challenging students. Shannan is adept at instruction in all subject areas and most particularly with social and emotional needs. Her instructional strategies make all the difference for our students. She also skillfully manages the support staff who assist her with her program. She devotes the same dedication to this role as she does to her students.

### **Crystal Meunier**

#### **Saint Johnsbury Academy**

Crystal is a caring, compassionate, dedicated educator who gives endlessly of her time. Mrs. Meunier's commitment to meet the diverse learning needs of her students is commendable. She is well respected by the faculty and staff and an essential player on the Academy's teaching faculty. Saint Johnsbury Academy is a better place due to Mrs. Meunier's commitment to her students and profession as a teacher.

## **Stephanie Moegelin**

### **Alburgh Community Education Center, Grand Isle Supervisory Union**

Stephanie is a strong advocate for students, colleagues and the community. She ensures that students always come first and works tirelessly to support and care for all of the students in our learning community. Our students have developed a strong trust in Stephanie as someone they can count on. She is an essential member of our Supervisory Union and no matter how challenging a day she may have had, she always comes in the next day with a smile ready to support our students.

## **Nathan Morris**

### **Fair Hurgh Union Middle and High School, Slate Valley Unified School District**

Nate has been an extraordinary high school science and mathematics teacher for the past thirteen years. He challenges each of his students while also building positive relationships as a role model that shows empathy, understanding, and acceptance toward everyone. Nate volunteers his time continuously to the benefit of his school and community. He is a true leader amongst his peers and an exceptional teacher that will continue to influence generations of students.

## **Kathy Murphy**

### **Gertrude Chamberlin School, South Burlington School District**

Kathy earned her Bachelor's degree in Education from UVM and her Master's degree in Language and Literacy from Harvard. Her work with students has spanned grades K-6 in New Hampshire and Massachusetts as well as in Luxembourg, before coming to teach in Vermont in her hometown of South Burlington. For the past twenty-seven years, Kathy has spent her career as a teacher who leads with her heart and has high expectations for children. She is a leader in our district who advocates for both students and teachers.

## **Brian Neufeld**

### **Albert D. Lawton School, Essex Westford Educational Community Unified Union School District**

Brian is an exemplary middle level science teacher who consistently goes above and beyond to provide an outstanding education and support system for his students. Brian's classroom is a hub of hand-on learning and discovery, and his classroom often extends to the outdoors where he immerses his students in the wonders of the natural world. Brian is a highly respected, collaborative colleague and teacher who cares deeply about his students and our school community. He is so deserving of this honor!

## **Mark Nigolian**

### **Edmunds Middle School, Burlington School District**

Mark has been working with language learners for twenty-nine years. He has been a teacher in the Burlington School District for twenty-three years, and has worked at just about every school in the District. He was an EL teacher for six years before that. He teaches summer school almost every summer. Mark was convinced to teach intermediate aged students in a new program for multilingual learners embedded in the District's summer SOAR program. The way Mark builds community and keeps his students' voices at the center of that community is extraordinary.

### **Jamie Olson**

#### **Missisquoi Valley Union Middle and High School, Missisquoi Valley School District**

Jamie is an outstanding educator who demonstrates leadership to peers by defining quality and rigor and support by sharing collaborative professional knowledge. She creates a space that staff and students constantly seek out because they feel safe. She seems to have an infinite well of patience and is a life preserver for many.

### **Casey Painter**

#### **Bellows Free Academy, Maple Run Unified School District**

Casey is an exceptional teacher who advocates for kids to ensure they are equipped with skills to go after any opportunity. Casey is an out of the box thinker, who believes if there is an opportunity to improve learning, she will find a way. Her character is displayed by comments of her colleagues and students: "[she displays] empathy, encouragement, determination; she makes students feel seen and heard; [she] has the ability to address any issue; she is reliable, listens, provides feedback, and advice".

### **Jed Pauls**

#### **Lothrop School, Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union**

Jed is a strong advocate for restorative practices, relationships and consistency to support learners. He provides universal social and emotional learning instruction for our learners throughout the year, facilitates small social groups where he provides specific activities to address identified learning targets and does assessments throughout the year to identify the function of the behavior for learners as they enter the classroom. Jed shares his strategies with colleagues.

### **Steve Perry**

#### **Williamstown Middle High School, Central Vermont Supervisory Union**

Steve is a dedicated and resourceful teacher. He goes above and beyond to meet the needs of all students. Steve is not afraid to work hard to advocate for his students, and he is a caring colleague. He has great communication with student families and has always been a leader to the staff.

### **Tricia Pfeiffer**

#### **Hartford High School, Hartford School District**

Tricia has worked at every level in our district - elementary, middle, and high school. Ms. Pfeiffer is currently the Hartford High School Flexible Pathways Department Chair and leads our Independent Learning Center (ILC). In addition to her leadership role, Tricia is a go-to for many of our school avoidant students. Ms. Pfeiffer's room is the most heterogeneous space in our school.

### **Rachel Popoli**

#### **Roxbury Village School, Montpelier Roxbury School District**

Rachel is a renowned pre-K and special educator in Roxbury. Her classroom of three and four year olds is simply a wonderful place to spend time in – filled with all kinds of natural decor and treasures found in their adventures in the woods. As a special educator, she has shown her quick ability to learn. Kids feel supported all the time when in Rachel's presence.

### **Aleha Racenet**

#### **Saint Johnsbury School, Saint Johnsbury School District**

Aleha is a first grade teacher with a background in early education. She is incredibly skilled at educating the Whole Child by incorporating academics, social and emotional learning, wellness and the students' family into her classroom. She is also a parent and a small business owner in St. Johnsbury. She is committed to her students in the classroom, the school as a whole and improving the community they all live in. Her students and families absolutely adore her. She has truly changed her students' lives for the better.

### **Mary Catherine Reed**

#### **Union Elementary School, Montpelier Roxbury School District**

MC is an amazing second grade teacher. She is one of the best professionals we have on staff--always working to get better at what she does (and she's pretty good already!). MC gets to know her families and kids. She shares an amazing bond with all who walk through her classroom door.

### **Christina Reider**

#### **Milton High School, Milton Town School District**

Christina has successfully built the Work Based Learning Program and continues to advocate for what is needed for a student to be successful. She is an effective problem solver and brings her knowledge of special education and work-based learning to creatively and effectively engage students to find the best path of learning. She is a solutions based thinker and she is a part of many different areas/teams/committees in the school and community.

### **Patricia Ryan**

#### **Proctor Jr./Sr. High School, Greater Rutland County Supervisory Union**

Ms. Ryan is an excellent teacher and math advocate. Patty works endlessly for her students by making learning fun and innovative. Ms. Ryan introduced two math initiatives to Proctor High School. Four students earned state-wide recognition: two for math writing and two for investing in the stock market. She continuously reviews her math practice in light of student outcomes and data. She leads at Proctor High School through professionalism, flexibility, and always putting her students first.

### **Dawn Sarli**

#### **Poultney High School, Greater Rutland County Supervisory Union**

Dawn is an educator with a remarkable commitment to personal and professional growth. This dedicated educator actively seeks new challenges and opportunities for self-improvement. Whether nurturing robust bonds with her students while establishing rigorous learning expectations and standards, collaborating with fellow educators to devise innovative activities for students, or fervently advocating for her pupils, her unwavering positivity and ever-present smile shine as distinguishing hallmarks.

### **Daisy Scarzello**

#### **U-32 Middle and High School, Washington Central Unified Union School District**

Daisy exemplifies everything good about teaching: strong relationships, solid teaching, high student engagement and commitment to her field. She's a gifted and dedicated teacher, sets an outstanding example in all aspects of pedagogy and teaching practice and always puts students at the center of learning.

### **Portia Senning**

#### **Richmond Elementary School, Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District**

Portia is a thoughtful and caring educator who focuses on building a positive and supportive community both inside and outside of the classroom walls. Portia has a talent for challenging students thinking and opening dialogue in authentic, respectful, and exciting ways that always leads to deeper understanding. Portia is revered by colleagues, appreciated by families, and adored by students. She is truly an outstanding educator!

### **Sonya Shedd**

#### **Wolcott Elementary, Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union**

Sonya is a veteran educator who truly makes a difference in her role. Born to teach, Sonya makes each day meaningful for every student. A consummate professional, Sonya is an exceptional colleague and a bedrock member of our learning community. Vermont is fortunate to have an educator like Sonya.

### **Erica Silveira**

#### **All Saints Catholic Academy**

Mrs. Silveira is a student-centered educator who consistently (and successfully) works to ensure each student has what he or she needs. She gets to know each of her students on a personal level, understanding what matters to each of them and embracing and celebrating their uniqueness. Each of Mrs. Silveira's students know they are valued, loved, and treasured.

## **Tina Skehan**

### **Hartland Elementary School, Windsor Southeast Supervisory Union**

Tina is such an incredible asset to Hartland Elementary School. In the library she supports every student in finding (literally) whatever they are passionate about. If we don't have the materials, she sources them out. She is the definition of doing what is best for students and letting their passions and interest shine!

## **Heather Skrabely**

### **Kingdom East School District**

As both a distinguished Middle School Science teacher at the Burke Town School and currently as a district STEAM coach Ms. Skrabely has inspired teachers and students, providing highly sought after support in STEAM instruction. She has a contagious enthusiasm and passion for providing learning experiences that are engaging. Students are unable to contain themselves with the excitement of the concepts they are exploring.

## **Sophie Skrobialowski-Wall**

### **Enosburg Falls Middle and High School, Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union**

Sophie is a passionate educator who goes above and beyond the call of teaching students about cooking. Sophie is an outstanding, dependable, and unflappable educator. The work she does uses food not only as a teaching tool, but as a means to build community. When you walk into her classroom it is evident her students demonstrate a deep respect for her enthusiasm and her engagement. Her students love sharing their creations with staff and for special events in the community.

## **Sarah Stebbins**

### **Cold Hollow Career Center, Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union**

Sarah is passionate about teaching pretech. She is invested in the success of all her students and always goes the extra mile to create relevant learning opportunities. Sarah's students see her authenticity and gentle love of teaching and they rise to her expectations seeing in themselves something they had not yet seen. Sarah not only focuses on pretech and employability skills, she also teaches what it means to be human and brave and how to live with integrity, honor, and compassion.

## **Kelly Stubbins**

### **Mill River Union High School, Mill River Unified Union School District**

Kelly is a middle school math teacher who goes above and beyond for her students. Kelly provides her students with amazing instruction and supplementary resources that they can access any time they need help. Beyond her expertise with her subject area, Kelly works incredibly hard supporting students' SEL needs. Her energy and never ending positivity about students, what they can do and achieve is inspiring.

### **Marsha Sutherland**

#### **Oxbow High School, Orange East Supervisory Union**

Marsha establishes a strong learning community in her classroom, building trust with her students and giving them the confidence to actively participate in their own learning. She continually adjusts her curriculum based on data gathered from formative check-ins. Carefully crafted differentiated lessons provide students with an opportunity to meet their individual goals. Marsha's classroom is active, with students working together and supporting each other under her guidance. She is a fantastic team player and just an all-around nice person. Her commitment to her students and to her profession is unparalleled.

### **Tara Sutton**

#### **Washington Village School, Central Vermont Supervisory Union**

Tara is an outstanding teacher! She always has a calm and welcoming presence. Tara is always looking for new ways to get the students engaged and excited about learning something new. All of her students love and appreciate her. Tara's co-workers also think highly of her and her ability to maintain a calm and productive classroom.

### **Julia Taylor**

#### **Leland & Gray Union Middle and High School, Windham Central Supervisory Union**

Julia has created a positive environment where students can express themselves and learn. You can walk around the halls and see her students' six-word memoirs or you can join her Coming of Age class's gallery of self-portraits using words. Her Intro to HS students can found sharing their 9th grade portfolios with adults throughout the building. She values authentic learning experiences and creates them for her students. She is truly an excellent educator.

### **Tamara Thompson**

#### **Walden Elementary School, Caledonia Central Supervisory Union**

Tamara is a consistent and powerful leader not only in her classroom but throughout the school. Her students love her, and anyone that observes her teaching can quickly understand why. She puts so much time and effort into each and every student. She is a teacher leader and someone that is well trusted and respected by the staff to go to for help or support. Tamara is a model teacher for good teaching and teacher leadership.

### **Eve Thorsen**

#### **Bellows Free Academy, Franklin West Supervisory Union**

Eve sees the highest potential in students. Eve holds students to high standards while also being able to maximize their ability on a personal level. She believes her students are capable of college-level reading and writing. Eve creates flexible learning environments that highlight personal learning for all students. She has created student leaders through the Yearbook program over the past few years. Eve is a superlative high school teacher.

### **Adam Vincelette**

#### **Northwest Career Technical Center, Maple Run Unified School District**

Adam Vincelette has been the automotive technology instructor for the Northwest Career & Technical Center since 2002. He never stops learning and has remained certified in multiple areas of automotive maintenance. His diligence and commitment to education has allowed him to provide his students with the best education possible because he is able to seamlessly integrate new knowledge into his curriculum. During the school year, he sought ways to enhance his own abilities as an educator by attending workshops on conflict resolution, literacy and special education. Adam recognized early on that one's approach to a subject or teaching methods are not set in stone. He has a level headed approach and his work ethic is unmatched.

### **Laura Vogell**

#### **Grafton Elementary School, Windham Northeast Supervisory Union**

Laura is reliable, she's trauma informed and SO smart. She knows every one of her students so well and plans her lessons for each of them, specifically. Laura is an amazing colleague, a wonderful person, always thinking of others, and goes the extra mile. She is a team player and so much fun to be around - her kids LOVE her.

### **Christina Wadsworth**

#### **Weybridge Elementary School, Addison Central School District**

Christina has been a vital part of the teaching staff at Weybridge. Her voracious appetite for reading and learning have been a hallmark of Weybridge's learning community, providing tinder and oxygen to her students' and colleagues' curiosity. Throughout her educational journey, she has been a strong advocate and voice for her students and the teachers. Christina goes above and beyond with experiential learning and helps students to understand the world as a complex and fascinating place.

### **Megan Walker**

#### **North Hero School, Grand Isle Supervisory Union**

Megan is a veteran teacher who has served both the Isle La Motte and North Hero Schools over her almost ten years in Grand Isle Supervisory Union. She currently teaches grades 3/4 in North Hero. Her impact is felt well beyond her classroom. Meg chairs the school PBIS, making it stronger every year, and she is a consistent leader in the supervisory union, serving as union rep, co-leading the math pilot, and co-writing our math learning targets. Her energy and commitment are contagious - we are lucky to have her on our team.

### **Joan Whaley**

#### **Elm Hill School, Springfield School District**

Joan is an inspiration. She continually searches for ways to improve her teaching and instill a love of learning. Joan pushes the edges of her comfort zone by learning more to improve her practice. She creatively accommodates students of all learning styles. Joan supports and advocates for her coworkers and strives to connect strongly with students and their families. She is consistently professional, kind, compassionate, and always has time for others.

### **Neil White**

#### **St. Johnsbury School, St. Johnsbury School District**

As a fourth grade literacy teacher, Neil creates an inclusive classroom that supports students to be enthusiastic about reading and writing and to be motivated to grow their literacy skills. Neil is a leader within his fourth grade team and in the larger school community and is looked up to by his colleagues for his passion, commitment and calm nature. And maybe most importantly, his read alouds of Harry Potter are legendary!

### **Veronica White**

#### **South Burlington High School, South Burlington School District**

Ms. White created an environment where her students felt safe and she leveraged that to talk about difficult topics, which has been a school-wide goal for a number of years. She walked the walk. She discussed difficult and challengingly books like *If You Come Softly* and *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson.

### **Michaela Whitman**

#### **Hinesburg Community School, Champlain Valley School District**

Michaela is an incredibly collaborative teacher. She is eager to learn new teaching strategies. I see her actively implementing those ideas and sharing her observations with her team. Michaela builds a community within her classroom and finds ways to include all students. She works actively to keep all students engaged in the classroom. Michaela has a wealth of professional knowledge about teaching.

### **Gwen Zwickel**

#### **Vergennes Union Elementary School, Addison Northwest School District**

Gwen devotes herself to the successful implementation of structured literacy for all students in our district. Gwen has strong communication skills, she is supportive of and stands up for her colleagues. She is an essential member of our district that thrives to improve outcomes for students, opportunities for teachers and success for all learners. Her organizational and systems thinking are equally matched by her empathy and optimism.

## **Champlain Elementary Teacher Named Vermont 2024 Teacher of the Year**

Burlington, Vt.- The Vermont Agency of Education announced today that Aziza Malik, an upper elementary teacher at Champlain Elementary School in Burlington is the 2024 Vermont Teacher of the Year. Ms. Malik will begin her tenure as Teacher of the Year on January 1, 2024.

Also recognized are the 2024 Vermont Teacher of the Year Distinguished Finalists, Courtney Poquette, and Lindsey Cox of Winooski High School.

Aziza Malik has been an upper elementary teacher at Champlain Elementary in Burlington for 14 years. At Champlain, Aziza focuses on fostering authentic relationships between schools and stakeholders, including local government, businesses, non-profits, and community members. These collaborative efforts allow her to interweave student and civic engagement, leadership development, and diverse perspectives into the curriculum.

"I am proud to recognize Aziza Malik as Vermont's Teacher of the Year," said Interim Secretary of Education Heather Bouchey. "Aziza's unwavering commitment to place-based education stands as a testament to her innovative teaching approach. Through community engagement her students connect with Vermont's land and Abenaki history to understand the real-world relevance of their education. Aziza's dedication to fostering this connection between learning and the local community is truly inspiring and sets a remarkable example for educators everywhere."

Ms. Malik's accomplishments at Champlain have revitalized the school's community garden space. Ms. Malik began this work as part of the Outdoor Committee. Through community partnerships she was able to secure an intern to help with planning, maintenance, and assistance for teachers using the space. This transformed the space into a collaborative part of the school grounds connecting the cafeteria, classrooms, and community. Thanks to her leadership the internship evolved into a full-time garden educator position. This person works with teachers to connect curriculum to hands on garden activities in the growing months and cooking activities in the winter months. The position piloted at Champlain Elementary, then spread to other schools in the district.

"Aziza is a fantastic teacher who creates opportunities for students that they wouldn't otherwise have access to," said Joe Resteghini, Principal of Champlain Elementary. "She is the model of an educator who goes above and beyond for her students. We are fortunate to have her at Champlain Elementary and I am incredibly happy to see her work recognized with this well-deserved award."

As Ms. Malik wrote in her application for Vermont Teacher of the Year, “Teaching should draw on all subject areas to foster a sense of community, a community that is inclusive and prospers on the diversity of its members. I want my students to come away not only with a sense of belonging, but also with the sense that they are valuable, contributing members of the community.”

Burlington Superintendent Tom Flanagan said, "In Burlington School District, we have made providing Deeper Learning experiences to students a key part of our education practice. This means giving students the chance to connect their learning to things that interest them outside the classroom. In many ways, Aziza Malik is leading the way on this work. From her partnerships in the community to her work to transform our outdoor spaces, she involves students in meaningful ways and makes a positive, long-lasting impact in their lives and learning, and in the world around us. Students, staff, and our community are better off because of her work, and Burlington School District is lucky to have Ms. Malik on our team. Congratulations Ms. Malik!"

As Vermont’s Teacher of the Year, Ms. Malik will focus on incorporating community into the classroom. She emphasizes the need for collaboration within communities to support common goals, believing that the curriculum should reflect the local community's needs and provide students with opportunities to apply their skills for the community's benefit. To advance this goal, Ms. Malik takes on leadership roles to help other teachers integrate place-based learning, both inside and outside the school, with the goal of fostering strong connections within the school community.

### **About the Teacher of the Year Program**

Since 1964, the Agency of Education has recognized outstanding Vermont teachers through the Vermont Teacher of the Year award. As the 2024 Vermont Teacher of the Year, Ms. Malik will serve as an advocate for the teaching profession, education and students. Ms. Malik will represent Vermont next spring for the National Teacher of the Year program, which includes events in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Malik will also be honored at the University of Vermont’s Outstanding Teacher Day, which will be held in November. For 40 years, UVM has annually recognized outstanding teachers throughout the state. The event honors educators from each supervisory union or school district, which are invited to nominate one teacher at the elementary or middle school level, one at the secondary level, and one at the technical center level.

### **About the Vermont Agency of Education**

The Agency of Education implements state and federal laws, policies, and regulations to ensure all Vermont learners have equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities. The Agency accomplishes this mission through the provision of its leadership, support, and oversight of Vermont’s public education system.

Connect with the Vermont Agency of Education [education.vermont.gov](https://education.vermont.gov).

## **Special Thanks To:**

Vermont Agency of Education

Vermont National Education Association

UVM Department of Education

University Event Services

UVM College of Education and Social Services

*All the family and friends of our honored teachers!*

# **43<sup>rd</sup> Vermont Outstanding Educator Day**

**Tuesday, November 14, 2023**

<https://www.uvm.edu/cess/doe/outstanding-educator-awards-and-vermont-teacher-year>