

School Reform Initiative of the Upper Valley

*Supporting Student Learning through
Professional Development for Educators*

Facilitators: Jay Davis, Donna Isaacs, Gene Kadish, Diana Watson

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Announcing: 2009-2010 New Coaches' Institute

"This was the best professional development experience of my career." -Upper Valley Superintendent

"I can honestly say that the course I took was one of the best I have ever taken." - Upper Valley Teacher

For All Educators Who Want To Take Their Practice to the Next Level

The New Coaches' Institute was developed to help educators hone their skills for developing truly collaborative school culture, asking challenging questions, and looking at student work together. When educators open themselves to thoughtful and supportive feedback by others, they have a powerful opportunity to effect significant change. This five-day institute, with the follow-up sessions, will provide the skills required for establishing and maintaining true collaboration among colleagues. Participants in the New Coaches institute learn the skills that promote reflection, creativity, and honesty.

The New Coaches Institute is for **all educators** interested in supporting students as learners, in helping facilitate collaborative work with colleagues by acting as a coach of a *Critical Friends Group*, (professional learning community) and/or for those in positions of group leadership.

It is common for participants to use the words "transformative", "powerful", "energizing" and "instrumental" after completing this course work. This is a practical and powerful experience that will enable participants to take their teaching practice to the next level.

What are the guiding questions of the training?

- What is a critical friends group and how does participation in one contribute to student achievement?
- What does it mean to *coach* a group of my colleagues?
- What can I learn about my practice through collaborative work?
- How can I most effectively coach a group of my colleagues to explore these questions with me?

*School Reform Initiative of the Upper Valley,
an affiliate of the School Reform Initiative*

Supporting Student Learning Through Professional Development for Educators

"Collaboration makes a positive difference only when it is focused on student performance for all and on the associated innovative practices that can make improvement happen for previously disengaged students."

The New Meaning of Educational Change 4th Edition, p 285

What is a Critical Friends' Group (CFG)?

A Critical Friends Group® (CFG) is one particular model of school-based professional learning community. The word *critical* in this context can be thought of as *essential* or *crucial*. A CFG consists of six to twelve educators who agree to work together regularly (usually monthly) to improve student learning. Every CFG includes a trained coach. During a CFG meeting, members engage in a variety of activities designed to promote sharing of teaching practice, reflection, collaborative problem solving and planning changes in practice based on those critical (crucial) conversations. These experiences use proven protocols as a means of building trust by engaging in significant work while providing a safe environment for taking risks.

What is School Reform Initiative? (<http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org>)

The School Reform Initiative (SRI) is a professional development initiative that focuses on supporting educators in developing collegial relationships, encouraging reflective practice, and rethinking leadership for restructuring schools -- *all in support of increased student achievement*.

What are the logistics?

When: In the first year, there will be five full-day sessions, roughly one per month and beginning in January. comprising a total of 35 hours.

Where: Center for School Success, 79 East Wilder Road, West Lebanon, NH

Cost: the first year of the institute is \$1,000 per person or **\$750 per person if five or more attend from the same school;**

The second year of training/collaborative support is \$300 per person

What else? Additional customized, school-based support beyond the second year can be arranged through School Reform Initiative of the Upper Valley.

Come join us!

For more information, please contact

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School Reform Initiative of the Upper Valley

*Support for Collaborative Work ...
Tailored to School Need*

Making **Critical Friends Groups** Work for You:

School Reform Initiative of the Upper Valley (an affiliate of the School Reform Initiative) now offers school-based support for collaborative learning communities. Comprising a cadre of four local educators trained as National Facilitators in CFG work, our organization exists to support the **creation, on-going implementation** and/or **rejuvenation** of collaborative learning structures in schools where a commitment to collaboration has been established.

We believe the following core principles:

1. Teacher participation in an effective Critical Friends Group contributes to improved teacher practice and increased student learning.
 2. Any effective professional development initiative must have on-going, collaborative support.
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Our school-based, on-going training will support the development of CFG coaches' skills, strengthen their knowledge base, and build their confidence to accept greater responsibility and leadership toward the goal of increased student learning.

Our Facilitators will work with school personnel to meet the specific needs of that school/district.

- Reinvigoration of Commitment • Improving/Modeling Facilitation Skills •
 - Problem-Solving • Creating Agendas for CFG Meetings • Strategic Planning •
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For scheduling and fee-structure information, contact any of the facilitators, or Center Coordinator Gene Kadish at Gene.Kadish@valley.net

Center of Activity Facilitators: Jay Davis, Donna Isaacs, Gene Kadish, Diana Watson

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