

School Reform Initiative of the Upper Valley

*Supporting Student Learning through
Professional Development for Educators*

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

Contact: Gene Kadish: Email: gene.kadish@valley.net; Phone: (802) 785-2929 (h); (802) 356-7885

Hello,

We are excited to announce that we will be offering two summer 2010 trainings: 1. Critical Friends Group New Coaches' Institute from July 5-9: 2. Two day Critical Friends Experienced Coaches Training on July 19 And 20. We look forward to working with new and experienced group of educators committed to improving student learning through examination of our own professional practices.

Please consider including staff from your school who are interested in:

- Deepening their work with critical friends groups
- Learning more about collaborative practices
- Reflecting on their own teaching
- Improving student learning

In order to begin getting material out to participants and to ensure that we have enough participants to run the trainings we would like the names and e-mail addresses of all members of your staff who plan to be part of the training.

I am enclosing a flyer about the trainings as well as contact information

Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Gene Kadish



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2010 New Coaches' Summer Institutes

"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 for educators interested in developing collaborative school culture. When educators open themselves to thoughtful and supportive feedback by others, they have a powerful opportunity to effect significant change. In this five-day institute, with follow-up sessions, participants learn the skills that promote reflection, creativity, and honesty while examining their own work and that of their students within a safe, non-threatening structure.

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 program. The New Coaches Institute 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 effectively coach a group of my colleagues to explore these questions with me?

"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* (i.e., 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 nation-wide professional development initiative that focuses on supports improving student outcomes by helping educators to develop collegial relationships, encourage reflective practice, and rethink leadership for restructuring schools.

What are the logistics?

When: There will be five full-day sessions, Monday through Friday July 5-9, 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 **\$900 per person if five or more attend from the same school;**

The second year of training/collaborative support is \$300 per person (2 half days). We can also contract to provide support to individual schools.

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!

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Summer 2010 Experienced Coaches Training **Making Critical Friends Groups Work for You**

- *Reinvigoration of Commitment* • *Improving/Modeling Facilitation Skills* • *Problem-Solving* • *Creating Agendas for CFG Meetings* • *Strategic Planning* •

This two-day training supports the on-going development of CFG coaches' knowledge and skills. It builds coaches' confidence to accept greater responsibility and leadership toward the goal of increased student learning.

Evidence supports that:

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.*

Who should attend?

- Educators from schools where a commitment to collaborative practice has been established
- Professionals interested in supporting the creation, on-going implementation and/or rejuvenation of collaborative learning structures.

When: Monday and Tuesday July 19 and 20 (14 hours)

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

Cost: \$400/person or **\$350/person for five or more participants from the same school.**

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

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