



BDCC Pipelines and Pathways Program Activity Update Winter 2024-2025

Dear P3 Partners,

During the 2024-25 school year, we will host more events and teach more classes than ever before. This means more student connections with employers of choice, colleges, and other organizations that will improve postsecondary outcomes. Thanks to your financial support, our educational partnerships, and the reputation of success we've built over the past seven years, P3 has become an integral part of each of our Windham County schools' day-to-day offerings.

Thank you for investing in and supporting P3. Please enjoy this overview of what has happened and what's taking shape this spring and summer.

Events:

At the beginning of the school year, Leland and Gray held their second annual Freshman Crash Course Carnival. Designed for incoming freshmen by Guidance Counselor Sarah Grasso, this event gives an overview of required courses, electives, and extracurricular activities so students can jump into high school armed with knowledge to make strategic choices about their own personal educational pathways. Brattleboro Union High School's Aspirations Program led by Holly Hammond of VSAC held a similar event with P3 support, using the Leland and Gray model. Incoming ninth graders participated in first day activities to help them learn more about what educational pathways the school offers.

The Third Annual P3 Reality Fair was once again a triumphant success! Hosted by Leland and Gray, students from Windham County schools participated in interactive booths at the Financial Literacy Experience and the Adulthood-101 Experience. Students from the Windham Regional Career Center Business Level II class, taught by Linda Alvarez, served as financial advisors again this year. They worked alongside local bankers from M&T and Brattleboro Savings & Loan to help student participants review their budget ledgers and balance their needs (housing, transportation) with their wants (pets, vacations, entertainment) in order to create a realistic budget. The Adulthood-101 experience added some additional skills to the usual lineup including UVM's 4-H that taught students about the mental health benefits of growing and arranging flowers, the Museum of Natural History brought along a live owl and snake as a means of engaging students about how to best support our environment, and River Gallery School taught a lesson on sewing and mending.



At Brattleboro Union High School, faculty and staff participated in a Professional Development Day in October. BDCC's team provided a program tailored to this group, focusing on postsecondary outcomes for Windham County graduates, an overview of the local economy, and local high-wage/high-growth career opportunities. Following the presentation, faculty went on field trips. Some visited local employers, with a chance to engage with employers in a variety of employment sectors. Others visited the Windham Regional Career Center to learn about their programming. In a survey of faculty following the event, teachers were impressed by the rigor of WRCC programming, the proximity to high-wage/high-growth careers, and 100% of those surveyed said they would engage in more conversations with students about their postsecondary plans. This is the capacity-building model we hope to utilize at each of our schools.

P3 in the Classroom:

Students from Twin Valley came to tour the Cotton Mill with their instructor Erin Lovett-Sherman again this year. This is always a highlight of the year. They visited Swiss Precision, True North Granola, BrattCave Bouldering Gym, and Old Timey Piano Crafts. Students learned about different careers, and what it's like to be a small business owner. Students also visited BDCC for a lively presentation with Business Acceleration Program staff, learning how they could tap into BDCC resources if they want to start their own businesses.

Students also toured the Brattleboro Food Coop. This is always a great experience because students learn about all the possible job opportunities that a single organization can have - not just the front-facing positions they're already familiar with. They were surprised to learn about the Coop's accounting, human resources, and graphic design departments. They learned that most Coop jobs are union jobs and developed an understanding about the history of unions as well as the advantages and disadvantages of being a part of one.

Finally, Twin Valley Students had the opportunity to meet with Christine Grutta from the Community College of Vermont and Amanda Richardson from Southern Vermont Area Health Education Center. They learned about CCV's early college program and dual enrollment and how they can access those programs as high school students. From Amanda, they learned about careers in healthcare and practiced suturing fake skin using SVAHEC's new virtual reality technology. After hearing about the healthcare careers, one student was able to job shadow in the nursing department at Grace Cottage and plans to take the LNA prep class over the summer.



Students in Nicole Awaad’s Foundations course at the Career Center, designed for ninth and tenth graders, introduces students to a variety of career sectors through worksite tours. In preparation for the tours, students once again participated in a body language and professionalism workshop so they could make good impressions while working with employers and employees at each of their site visits. Mock interviews with community volunteers helped the students put these lessons into practice.

One of the most impactful things we do, with students who have completed the full career readiness curriculum, is to connect directly with professionals from their chosen career pathways. Students from Terry Davison Berger’s Senior Survival class at Leland and Gray, Rachel Fox’s Professional Communications class at the Windham Regional Career Center, and Erine Lovett-Sherman’s P3 Course at Twin Valley High School participated in informational interviews with over 35 local businesses through November and December. GPI Construction, VT Game Wardens, The Brattleboro Retreat, and the Windham County Humane Society were just a few of our highlights. As a result, several students received job and internship offers from the businesses they interviewed with.

The community can easily see the work being done during our big events like the Reality Fair or Sophomore Summit. But the most impactful, holistic approach to career education happens in the classroom. BDCC has enlisted the help of Brattleboro Community Television to create a short film that will provide a window into the great work these students and instructors engage in every single day that truly impacts postsecondary outcomes. We hope to complete the project for release in the fall of 2025.

Spring 2025 - What’s Up Next:

There are many exciting things planned for this spring. Due to an increased demand we have been asked to support more events across the schools. Fearless Futures will be back again this April at Bellows Falls and Twin Valley. With over 50 businesses, colleges and organizations at each event, students will be able to learn about the wide range of pathways to success including careers, college, entrepreneurship, the military, public service, gap years and more. Interactive tables teaching students how to create an “elevator pitch,” design a business card, or the importance of social capital will round out the day’s events.



This year, P3 is helping Leland and Gray to host a new event - a Colleges, Credentials and Certificates Expo. This event will take aspects of Fearless Futures but focus on colleges as well as employers that offer educational opportunities while you work. Colleges from every state in New England will be present! Businesses that provide training that is transferable across their employment sector including certificates, credentials of value, apprenticeship programs, and those that offer tuition reimbursement will be featured. This is another great example of the growth in our collaboration with the L&G Team. They had the idea of reviving an in-person college fair but one that incorporates all of the alternative pathways. They took on organizing the college side of the program, while BDCC is securing the career, training and service participants.

The Windham Regional Career Center is hosting a Practical Life Skills Fair, similar to the Adulting-101 experience at the Reality Fair. This is a great opportunity for us to reach more, younger students in the Brattleboro schools. Sophomores from BUHS will learn about skills necessary for adult life as well as gain exposure to all programs at WRCC that become available to them during their junior and senior years. They will be able to meet with WRCC instructors, local businesses and volunteers who will help them gain hands-on experience that will prepare them for life and help them make choices for their next steps in high school. Again, this creative and engaging event is the result of our deep collaboration with the Career Center. P3 will handle the Life Skills programming, engaging volunteers and structuring activities, while WRCC faculty can focus on creating activities and programming to expose students to their offerings.

Twin Valley sophomore students will be participating in a CCV Access Day where they can take a college class, hear from actual college students about their experiences, meet with local employers, and meet CCV faculty and staff. They will learn about early college, dual enrollment, and how to pay for college. The hope for next year is to revitalize the Sophomore Summit by combining the WRCC Practical Skills Fair with CCV Access Day so every sophomore in the region understands the unique options available to them, to make informed, strategic choices about next steps in their educational pathways during junior and senior years.

Our final event of the spring season is a High Demand Careers and Apprenticeship Fair in partnership with the Vermont Department of Labor and VSAC's Aspirations Program. The fair, taking place at Brattleboro Union High School, will help students in grades eight through twelve learn about local high-wage opportunities.

To finish off the 24/25 school year, we will also host our second annual P3 Gathering of Educators. This is an opportunity for professionals from each of the schools to have a chance to meet and discuss what career-education projects they're working on in their schools and exchange ideas and best practices for implementation. P3 Partner of the Year Awards will be given to a new batch of teachers who join our core of amazing educators that make career education a priority in their classrooms.



To wrap up the year, BDCC will once again hold our summer Youth Career Bootcamp at the Boys & Girls Club. This five-day intensive includes aspects of the P3 curriculum as well as business and college tours within walking distance. Students can receive help developing resumes or job applications, and this year the Club will offer a second week for students with a college-focused program that includes campus tours.

Special Thanks:

Once again I want to say a special thank you to the P3 Windham team including Linda Alvarez, Rachel Fox, Nicole Awaad, Anne Doran, Rhonda Winegarner, and Joyce Rathburn from WRCC; Terry Davidson Berger, Sarah Grasso, and Kayla Anthony from LGHS; Heather Waryas, Mark Gebo, and Andrea Carlson from BFUHS; Holly Hammond (VSAC); and Erin Lovett-Sherman and Denise Piffard from TVHS. Without their passion for helping students reach their full potential and their boots on the ground tenacity, P3 would not exist. We could not implement this program without these talented and committed educational partners.

And thank you. We couldn't do this work without you. We encourage you to participate in one or both of our upcoming Fearless Futures events, or visit a classroom and serve as a mock interviewer or career panelist. Whatever career sector you come from, we know you have wisdom to impart. We're so proud of the work that we do and the students will inspire you. Please reach out if you'd like to see P3 in action.

Sincerely,

Christy A. Betit, BDCC Pipelines and Pathways Program Manager

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About Pipelines & Pathways

BDCC's Pipelines and Pathways Program (P3) provides career education within the five southeastern Vermont public high schools. P3 helps students develop their personalized learning plans (PLP) through learning experiences to develop knowledge about career opportunities, and achieve their goals after graduation. Students develop soft skills, financial literacy, knowledge about economic sectors and skills in-demand through hands-on activities, work-based learning, and mentorships. Pipelines & Pathways is a BDCC Workforce Center of Excellence program based on SeVEDS strategies to increase the size and quality of the region's workforce. For more information please visit <https://brattleborodevelopment.com/engaging-with-high-school-students/>

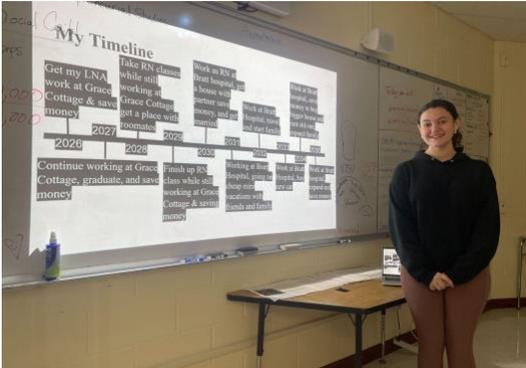
P3 was launched as a five year pilot, thanks to historic investment from the Vermont Community Foundation and McClure Foundation, the Vermont Training Program, WCEDP Vermont Yankee closure funds, and municipal contributions to SeVEDS. In 2023 P3 reached a major program milestone by commitments from the private sector. M&T Bank, whose support was matched by local employers G.S. Precision and C&S Wholesale Grocers joins funding partners McClure Foundation, the George W. Mergens Foundation, the Windham Regional Career Center, the West River Education District, and the Windham Southwest Supervisory Union, in supporting P3 across southeastern Vermont.

PHOTO GALLERY



This fall BDCC provided an in-service program for Brattleboro Union High School faculty, which included site visits to local employers and small businesses.





P3 is all about the kids, but expanding and improving P3 relies upon a committed team of educational partners. Growing interest, commitment, ideas and energy from faculty are helping us bring career education classes, events, experiences and connections to more students each year. P3 has helped to create a career education peer community among the five schools, which not only makes the programs stronger but has empowered our educator partners. Each year we celebrate some of these partners with a special award, and convene them to share ideas, challenges, triumphs and goals for the coming year (bottom right, faculty with their awards, P3 Program Manager Christy Betit on the far left).