

## **Vermont Learning-Support Initiative No-Frills Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 3 November 2017**

### **Community Film Screenings and Other Outreach:**

In June and October VLSI offered film & discussion opportunities in Greensboro and Hardwick, at which a short documentary film on learning and attention challenges for middle-school students was shown. The audiences were enthusiastic, suggesting that additional screenings of similar films would be welcome. A second film, on the subject of neurodiversity, is scheduled to be shown this winter in Greensboro. It was also suggested that VLSI make a short video of local middle- and high-school students who learn differently talking about their lives in and out of school. This video could be shown in schools and to community members to raise awareness. We are evaluating potential community partners in order to make this happen.

Leadership turnover at area schools, including the one that hosted VLSI's first Parent Engagement Program for middle-school students, impacted our outreach opportunities somewhat, but our efforts continue. Praised by a departing principal as "much-needed work" and rated highly in participant surveys, clearly they have been appreciated! Also, at a local superintendent's invitation last week VLSI made a presentation to the SU's leadership council. From this, there may be an opportunity to partner with them on a large grant proposal aimed at boosting the educational opportunities for underserved student populations.

### **Advocacy:**

Along with the outreach to school leaders, VLSI has begun to work with two statewide educational policy initiatives. The Vermont Education Equity Project seeks to address the lingering inequities in our public schools through an initial presentation of relevant data and culminating in a statewide conference earlier this month. We contributed data pertaining to students with learning and attention issues having an equitable path to college to the discussion, and our engagement will be ongoing.

We have also been invited to the inaugural meeting of the Youth Policy Working Group in a couple of weeks, which aims to create a coherent, comprehensive policy approach to Vermonters aged 8-24. At this meeting, sponsored by Vermont nonprofits long engaged in giving children greater opportunities to develop their potential in and out of school, we can and will bring to the table the often-overlooked perspective of older youth and emerging adults who learn differently, making the case for greater access to the college opportunity in particular.

**The work continues! Happy Holidays!**

Brad Smith, Founder & Director

*To be removed from VLSI's mailing list, please simply respond accordingly to this email.*