



The
ROWLAND
Foundation

Investing in
Vermont's Teachers

Letter to Fellows

Vermont Principals

August 2024

Dear Rowland Fellows,

I hope your summer is going well and that you are enjoying life with your family and loved ones.

As I write this letter, I'm looking up at the slopes of Killington, lush green now, with the chair lifts ferrying mountain bikers to the summit and kids playing in the hotel pool. I've been attending the VPA Leadership Academy this week, and I think this beautiful setting is lifting the spirits of all of the educators here.

It has been truly wonderful to catch up with educators from all across Vermont this week, and to talk with principals who are encouraging their teachers to apply for a Rowland Fellowship. It's also been terrific to see so many Rowland Fellows currently serving as principals here: Jean Berthiaume (RFO9), Matt DeBlois (RFO9), Jen Kravitz (RF12), Bianca McKeen (RF16), Caitlin Steele (RFO9), and Mike McRaith (RF13), of course, a former principal who so beautifully orchestrated this week's convening and supports Vermont principals all year round.

On a personal note, it was moving to see Jean & Bianca accept statewide awards this week in recognition of their work. Bianca was named Vermont Assistant Principal of the Year, and is currently transitioning into her new role as Assistant Superintendent in Rutland. Jean was named Vermont High School Principal of the Year, and will represent our state in Washington, D.C. this October at a national award ceremony. Both Jean & Bianca used their acceptance speeches to thank other people, notably, their colleagues, family, and fellow Rowland Fellows, which was telling in its humility and generosity. It was a welcome reminder of how quickly these great leaders are to share credit with others. It made me think of the idea of *servant leadership*.

I remember Mike McRaith telling me once that the principalship often has a pastoral dimension. He pointed out that principals not only support specific students and families through times of crisis, but oftentimes entire communities in the way that the village pastor, priest, or rabbi might have for earlier generations. It's true that principals host joyful rites of passage for our young people, from graduations to concerts to sports championships, but they also sometimes carry their communities through dark times, too. When our small towns and cities are rocked by devastating events like a flood, suicide, driving accident, or racist attack, the Vermont principals I know serve as the emotional centers of their communities. In this moment, principals are filling a civic void, holding our communities together through an ethic of care in a way that our politicians rarely do now.

According to our most recent survey data (Spring 2022), about 15% of Rowland Fellows serve as principals or assistant principals in Vermont, and a little more than half of Rowland Fellows work as teachers, counselors, librarians, and/or teacher leaders. I hope our Rowland Fellow principals know the debt of gratitude that we have for their work in these very challenging times. And I hope that all of us find the opportunity to show some grace towards these school leaders who, on many days, are really holding so much together for their schools and communities.

Thank you, Vermont principals! We appreciate you.

Take care and see you soon,

Mike

P.S. Thanks to everyone for sending their personal, professional & family news! It's important to celebrate these big life changes, and it's helpful to use our network to share professional learning and other opportunities.

Rowland Foundation Updates

The 13th Annual Rowland Conference

Democracy & School



The 13th Annual Rowland Conference will take place on Thursday, October 17, 2024 on the theme of Democracy & School with keynote speaker Jill Lepore. Dr. Lepore writes for *The New Yorker* and teaches at Harvard University. She is the author of [*These Truths*](#), a one-volume history of the United States that was a *New York Times* bestseller. You can also catch her on the Pushkin Industries podcasts [*The Last Archive*](#) or [*Elon Musk: The Evening Rocket*](#). Here are some of [Mike's favorite Jill Lepore quotes](#). Dr. Lepore also recently submitted an amicus brief to the Supreme Court, [discussed here](#).

We're already looking ahead to opening conference registration the first week of September! If your school pre-registered via earlybird last spring, your school contact will receive a notice that it's time to enter your attendees, preferred workshops, dietary restrictions, and accommodations into the UVM registration portal. If not, feel free to register a team through the Rowland website once we've got the link posted in September. Stay tuned!

Fellowship Info Sessions

2025 Rowland Fellowship Applications

Do you know a teacher who would make a great Rowland Fellow? Well, as Senior Associate Jeanie Phillips says, "Summer is the time to dream!" This year, we're encouraging prospective candidates to start work early on their fellowship applications and avoid the end of year crunch. We've just sent every school in Vermont this [flyer to encourage future applicants to start early](#)! Feel free to make copies and share with teachers you know!

Please tell your colleagues that our next **Fellowship Info Sessions with Executive Director Mike Martin** will be on Aug. 15, Sept. 19 & Oct. 17 — all third Thursdays at 4:00 pm. To attend, interested teachers should [sign up here so they get the meeting invite](#).



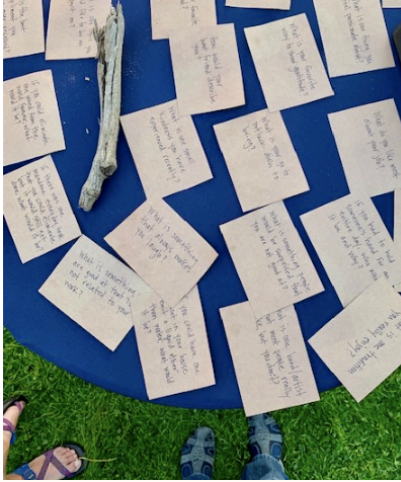
Scan to download application directions & forms

Application window: Nov. 1 – Dec. 31, 2024



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›Rowland Women's Leadership Retreat





Congratulations and thank you to Angela Bauer (RF15), Ellen Berrings (RF13) & Abbie Bowker (RF17), this year's planning team for the Rowland Women's Leadership Retreat! [More photos here.](#)

The VPA Leadership Academy



Many Rowland Fellows presented and connected this past week at the annual Vermont Principals' Association Leadership Academy in Killington. Seen here: Gabe Hamilton (RF15), Jess DeCarolis (RF09) & Matt DeBlois (RF09).



Mike McRaith (RF13), seen here hosting the VPA Leadership Academy.

Celebrations

Rowland Principals



Congratulations to Jean Berthiaume, Vermont High School Principal of the Year!



Congratulations to Bianca McKeen, Vermont Assistant Principal of the Year!

Gratitude



Vermont State Botanist Molly Parren, daughter of Lauren Parren (RF12), had a big spring! Her discovery of a False Mermaid made [national news](#) and she was featured on CBC Radio and [VT Public](#) about a snake her team found — the longest documented black racer in Vermont at 5 feet, eleven inches. She was also featured on television with [this information about snapping turtles](#).

From Lauren, “Plants, snakes, turtles: life doesn't get much better! The roof went on today for the ADU we are building for her off the back of our house with move-in expected in August. I'm a very happy mama. My other daughter just finished teaching the spring semester at Dean College and will begin teaching a summer semester soon. Life is good!”

Courtesy Posts

Professional Learning in Partnership



There are a few spots left for this incredible opportunity! The Great Schools Partnership, The Rowland Foundation, and Shelburne Farms are pleased to sponsor this amazing course again this summer, designed and instructed by Senior Associate Jeanie Phillips (RF14):

Collaborative Practices for Equity

August 21–23, September 30, and November 8, 2024 from 9am–4pm

This is a highly participatory course designed for teachers and administrators interested in developing the skills necessary for leading equity work. Participants will actively build a culture that supports collaboration and will reflect on the process of sustaining a collaborative culture in their own settings. [Please share the flyer with colleagues!](#)

[Register here!](#)



Students & staff at last year's Collaborative Practices for Equity course at Shelburne Farms.