

OUR FIFTEENTH ANNUAL STATEWIDE CONFERENCE

America at 250

We Need a Declaration of Interdependence

October 29, 2026

The Davis Center
University of Vermont

REGISTER NOW! therowlandfoundation.org



The
ROWLAND
Foundation

Investing in
Vermont's Teachers

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Baratunde Thurston

"In this age of cascading crises, as we revisit the more complete founding narrative of our nation, living in the truth of our interdependence may be the most important choice we can make."

Conference Schedule

8:00	Registration, Coffee & Breakfast
9:00	Welcoming Remarks Michael Martin, Executive Director
	Land Acknowledgement Anne Bergeron, Trustee & 2011 Rowland Fellow
9:30	Keynote Address Baratunde Thurston
10:30	Break
10:45	Morning Workshops
12:00	Lunch
12:45	School & District Team Time
1:20	Student Presentation
1:45	Afternoon Workshops
3:00	Conference Ends

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Baratunde Thurston

Baratunde Thurston is an Emmy-nominated storyteller, producer, and thought leader weaving stories of interdependence across our relationships with nature, humans, and technology. As the host of PBS's *America Outdoors with Baratunde Thurston* and the creator of the acclaimed *How To Citizen* podcast, Baratunde has redefined citizenship as a practice of active participation, responsibility, and community building. His newest show, *Life with Machines*, explores how we can live well with technology, not just endure it.

SPECIAL WORKSHOP

Who is A Vermonter? Othering & Belonging, Yesterday & Today*

How does Vermont's eugenics history continue to influence our discussions about social issues such as education, housing, and health? With her 2023 Book "*Vermont for the Vermonters*": *The History of Eugenics in the Green Mountain State*, Mercedes de Guardiola makes this influence visible through the lens of history. This workshop will show how prevailing attitudes about who counts as a Vermonter have persisted across time and how a lack of awareness of this history hinders our capacity to meet today's challenges. Participants will leave with practical ideas about how Vermont's Educational Quality Standards and IRIS Ethnic Studies framework can be brought together with the Eugenics in Vermont high school study guide to create meaningful classroom conversations about othering and belonging in Vermont, yesterday and today.

Presented by **Mercedes de Guardiola** (she/her) *Historian*; **Mike McRaith** (he/him) *Deputy Senior Executive Director, Vermont Principals' Association & 2013 Rowland Fellow*

* Recommended for Students

While students are welcome to attend any of the workshops offered, workshops marked with an asterisk have been intentionally designed with the student experience in mind.

Workshops

Expanding Experience: Diverse Representation in the Classroom*

When was the first time you had a teacher of African Diasporan, Indigenous, or Global Majority descent? For many students in Vermont the answer is late or never. This workshop will provide a space to discuss the importance of representation at the front of the classroom, and notably, its impact on students' development of positive self-concept. Participants will engage in storytelling, dialogue, and writing workshop in the spirit of respectful inquiry. With these new skills and insights, educators will leave with a new understanding and greater awareness of the valuable role that diverse representation plays in the development of students from all backgrounds.

Presented by **Rajnii Eddins** (he/him) *Poet, Educator & Facilitator, Rajnii Eddins Enterprises*; **Infinite Culcleaseure** (he/him) *Grade 3 Teacher, JJ Flynn Elementary School & Rowland DEW Scholar*



Interdependence in Action: Diversifying Vermont's Educator Workforce

What would it look like for Vermont to move from independence to interdependence in building a diverse educator workforce? This workshop explores how shared responsibility across schools, communities, and individuals can strengthen efforts to recruit, grow, and sustain educators of color. Participants will engage with a statewide recommendation guide and a "Choose Local" pathways tool through guided exploration, scenario-based application, and reflection on their roles within this ecosystem. Participants will leave with concrete strategies, a clearer understanding of educator pathways, and a personalized plan to leverage these resources to build stronger pathways into and through the educator profession.

Presented by **Danielle Pierre** *Senior Associate, Great Schools Partnership*; **Scarlett Tannetta** (she/her) *Senior Associate, Great Schools Partnership*

Grounded in Story: Mindful Practices for Authentic Storytelling*

As AI increasingly generates the stories around us, the irreplaceable power of the human voice has never mattered more. In this workshop, we invite you to participate in experiential, playful practices designed to awaken our intuitive capacity to discover, own, and celebrate our individual and collective stories. As we ground, vision, move, breathe, write, meditate, and sketch in an atmosphere of radical welcome, we'll open our hearts to our collective interdependence as educators, students, and human beings so that we can speak our truths and honor the truths of others. Participants will leave this workshop with an artifact depicting how these practices can be woven into our school communities and daily life, so that we can consciously co-create a present that will move us lovingly and confidently into an interdependent future.

Presented by **Anne Bergeron** (she/her) *Academic Coach/Writing & Mindfulness Instructor, The Sharon Academy, Rowland Foundation Trustee & 2011 Rowland Fellow*; **Tara Cariano** (she/they) *Facilitator & Educator, Wholehearted Schools & 2018 Rowland Fellow*



Living the Vision of the Education Quality Standards (EQS)

How do we live toward the vision of the EQS that "all Vermont students are afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality and are equitable, anti-racist, culturally responsive, anti-discriminatory, and inclusive"? In this workshop, we will get concrete about what the EQS looks like in practice and identify strengths and opportunities in our educational systems. Participants will collaborate to analyze educational artifacts (e.g., strategic plans, educator evaluation tools, PD plans, course/unit overviews, etc.) and identify areas of alignment with the EQS and possibilities for future growth. Together, we will reflect on our new understandings and identify actions to take in our professional settings as we work to achieve the vision of the EQS.

Presented by **Gwen Carmolli** (she/her) *Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Colchester School District*; **Jeanie Phillips** (she/her) *Senior Associate, Great Schools Partnership, Senior Associate, The Rowland Foundation & 2014 Rowland Fellow*

How Can Students Lead Meaningful Classroom Discussions?*

When we prepare students to drive classroom conversations, we are also preparing them for civic life. Teachers and students from Champlain Valley Union (CVU) and Harwood High Schools will share techniques and strategies they've developed that give students the skills necessary to lead high-quality classroom discussions. CVU and Harwood juniors and seniors will lead participants in small group activities designed to build the requisite skills needed to train students how to facilitate on their own. Participants will leave with materials and concrete strategies they can use to develop student-led dialogue in their classroom practice.

Presented by **Brad Miller** (he/him) *Social Studies Teacher, Champlain Valley Union High School & 2024 Rowland Fellow*; **Adam Sargent** (he/him) *History Teacher, Harwood Union High School*; **Kathy Cadwell** (she/her) *Harkness Mentor & 2016 Rowland Fellow*; and *Students*

The Power of Sustained Inquiry: National History Day*

How can we transform traditional history curriculum into a dynamic engine for personalized learning that empowers students to become expert researchers and storytellers? This workshop explores National History Day (NHD) as a premier model for balancing deep content knowledge with essential inquiry skills and media literacy. Participants will engage in roundtable discussions facilitated by students who have competed at the national level, exploring how student choice and authentic audiences drive rigorous, sustained inquiry into our nation's history. Educators will leave with actionable strategies to implement NHD frameworks that foster civic engagement and provide students with the high-level research tools necessary to navigate and contribute to our modern world.

Presented by **Allie Vega** (she/her) *Librarian, South Burlington School District & 2020 Rowland Fellow*; **Meg Mallory** (she/her) *Outreach Educator, Vermont Historical Society*; and *Students*

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES DOUBLE-HEADER

Restorative “Discipline”: What, So What, Now What? *

(Morning Session Only)

What if the way we respond to student behavior is actually reinforcing the very outcomes we are trying to change? This workshop is designed to help educators critically examine their current disciplinary practices through the lens of the Social Discipline Window and align them with restorative, relationship-centered approaches. Participants will engage in guided reflection, collaborative team discussions, and hands-on auditing of their school's most common behavioral referrals, analyzing what those behaviors communicate and how adult responses shape outcomes. By the end of the session, participants will leave with concrete strategies to shift from doing discipline to or for students toward doing it with them, equipping them with the tools to design more equitable, accountable, and restorative responses that can be immediately applied in their school settings.

Students as Leaders: Restorative School Communities*

(Afternoon Session Only)

What happens when students lead the work of building restorative school communities? This workshop is designed for students to explore how they can advocate for and help implement restorative practices that strengthen belonging, accountability, and healthy relationships in their schools. Participants will engage in connection circles, small-group dialogue, and collaborative planning activities to reflect on their school contexts, share experiences, and identify opportunities for student leadership in restorative work. Through structured discussion and peer exchange, students will develop practical ideas for leading restorative initiatives in their own schools. Participants will leave with new connections, increased confidence as restorative leaders, and concrete next steps for advocating for and implementing restorative practices in their school communities.

Presented by **Carrie Gilman** (she/her) *English/RP Coordinator/SEL Coach, Montpelier Roxbury School District & 2023 Rowland Fellow*; **Erica Wallstrom** (she/her) *Senior Associate, Great Schools Partnership, Rowland Foundation Trustee & 2014 Rowland Fellow*; **Darthula Mathews** (she/her) *Senior Associate, Great Schools Partnership*

The Rowland Fellowship: A Shared Vision for School Change

Are you a teacher with a compelling idea for how to improve your school's culture and climate? The Rowland Foundation's mission is to invest in Vermont teachers to positively change the culture and climate of schools. Each year, we award up to six Rowland Fellowships of up to \$150,000 to Vermont teachers working in Grades 5–12. In this workshop, teachers will begin the work of articulating a vision, identifying assets already in place at their schools, and crafting a Fellowship proposal for the Rowland Foundation's upcoming application window: November 1–December 31, 2026.

Presented by **Jean Berthiaume** (he/him) *Principal, Winooski High School, Senior Associate, The Rowland Foundation & 2009 Rowland Fellow*

Teachers As Artists: Crafting Our Declaration of Interdependence

What would it look like for educators to stand together and artistically declare our interdependence – in our classrooms, in our schools, and in our communities? This hands-on art-making workshop invites teachers to step into the role of artist to process the keynote and envision a Teachers' Declaration of Interdependence. Guided by a teaching artist, participants will use collage as a medium for reflection, brainstorming, and creating in order to explore values, set goals, and map out strategies and support. Working together, participants will discover shared values, build community, and leave with something personal and lasting: an artifact to anchor their teaching practice in transformative solidarity and collective liberation. Plus, you know, art making!

Presented by **Kia' Rae Hanron** (she/her) *Education Consultant & Teaching Artist, Kias Art Room*

We Keep Us Safe: Schooling in 2026

Schools are charged with the task of educating all students—starting crucially with students' feeling of safety and belonging. With authoritarianism on the rise and following recent incidents involving federal immigration authorities, we invite you to join us as we reimagine community safety together. Drawing on our experiences as educators, activists, administrators, and board members, we will facilitate a workshop that welcomes the expertise in the room while sharing actionable steps toward strengthening communities and protecting students emotional well-being. We welcome all participants' questions, thoughts, fears, and unique perspectives as we examine various models that strive to create the belonging that allows all students to thrive.

Presented by **Christie Nold** (she/her) *Teacher, South Burlington High School*; **Lars Gold** (they/them) *Teacher, South Burlington High School*; **Monica Desrochers** (she/her/ella) *Director of School Climate and Belonging, Vermont Agency of Education*; **Elissa Galvez** (she/they) *School Board Member, South Burlington School District*

Consider Applying for a Rowland Fellowship!

What is your vision for change at your school?

The Rowland Foundation invests in Vermont teachers to positively change the culture and climate of schools. Each year, we award up to six Rowland Fellowships of up to \$150,000 to Vermont teachers working in middle grades and high schools. By providing time, funding, and collaboration structures, we help teachers pursue the change-making ideas that improve the lives of students and make positive change possible. We are looking for applicants who believe in shared leadership and the democratic mission of school. Submit your proposal for a 2027 Rowland Fellowship between November 1 and December 31, 2026. Visit therowlandfoundation.org for details.

To learn more & register, please visit therowlandfoundation.org

THE ROWLAND FOUNDATION IS JOYFULLY COMMITTED TO PROVIDING EQUAL ACCESS TO ALL ATTENDEES AT THE ANNUAL ROWLAND CONFERENCE. Accommodations available upon request include: ASL interpretation, assisted listening devices, special seating, and dietary and other allergen accommodations. UVM facilities are accessible in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Please visit therowlandfoundation.org for more information.