



The New Teachers Retreat

Press Release

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Inaugural New Teachers Retreat Provides Learning Opportunities to Early-Career Teachers

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Keene, N.H. – According to a 2014 study by the Alliance for Excellent Education, 40-50% of new teachers in the United States leave within their first five years on the job, and moreover, roughly half a million U.S. teachers either move or leave the profession each year, which ends up costing school districts upwards of \$2.2 billion annually.¹ Meanwhile very few professional development opportunities exist to help these teachers hone their craft.

“The first years of teaching are notoriously difficult,” said Alexandra Stewart, the Executive Director of The New Teachers Retreat, a new group recently founded to address this issue. The New Teachers Retreat is a new organization of teachers committed to the development and retention of young talent in the teaching profession. “Many teachers leave the profession in the first five years before they get a chance to really excel at their job, which is why it is so important to provide quality professional development specifically for this group of teachers. We want their talent and energy to stay in teaching.”

The New Teachers Retreat will host its first annual retreat July 14-16, 2017 at Keene State College to provide an opportunity for those in their first three years of teaching to gain perspective, knowledge, and skills in order to improve their practice. By providing a network of experience, support, and encouragement, the organization hopes to play a role in reversing the negative trends affecting educators.

“School leaders and teachers know how much it hurts to lose staff every year,” said Svea Schreiner, Curriculum Director. “Program continuity and stability, as well as overall positive school cultures, are extremely difficult to maintain alongside high attrition. New teachers are particularly susceptible to buckling under the pressures inherent to the profession, and trends have shown many to be leaving the field in droves.”

Although professional development opportunities for teachers exist, demand for these programs is often greater than space available, and many competitive programs prefer more experienced teachers, leaving new teachers and their specific needs behind. The New Teachers Retreat fills a specific niche to give new teachers a space to debrief on the past year, learn from one another, and develop relationships with a community of their peers.

“I was fortunate to participate in high-quality professional development courses during my first three years of teaching, and while the experts and content were useful, it was in my conversations and relationships formed with other teachers where I found the greatest benefit,” said Ali Stewart. “The New Teachers Retreat aims to create the professional development I would have loved when I was starting out.”

¹ On the Path to Equity: Improving the Effectiveness of Beginning Teachers (July, 2014) Alliance for Excellent Education.
<http://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PathToEquity.pdf>

The Founding Board of the New Teachers Retreat includes:

- Alexandra Stewart, Executive Director, is a high school English and Special Education teacher in Boston Public Schools. A former campaigner and activist, she transitioned to the field of education in 2013 through Teach for America. She has a master's of Public Administration from the University of New Hampshire and a master's of Education in Curriculum and Teaching from Boston University.
- Svea Schreiner, Curriculum Director, is a secondary English teacher with experience in rural schools. She recently completed her master's degree in Educational Leadership at Boston University.
- Erik Dellea, Operations Director, is a consultant with a focus on enterprise software implementation.
- Amber Malm, Founding Board Member, is a secondary Boston Public School English teacher and Boston Teacher Residency alumna with a master's from UMASS Boston. She is a former education consultant and Peace Corps Volunteer.
- Julia Hood, Founding Board Member, is a museum educator at Reynolda House Museum of American Art in North Carolina.
- Lizza Vachon, Founding Board Member, is a middle school math and science teacher with independent and private schools experience. She recently completed her master's degree in Mind, Brain, and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

They, along with other mentor teachers from New Hampshire and Massachusetts, will lead 12 instructional hours to help new teachers improve their practice. The program includes targeted instruction in key areas such as classroom management, parent/community engagement and communication, self-care, assessment, and planning. Through daily instructional sessions interspersed with personal and collective planning/collaboration time, the Retreat will equip new teachers with the skills, resources, and mindsets needed to thrive as educators.

The 18 participants will be making their way from throughout New England and as far away as Texas. Not only will they receive direct instruction from mentor teachers and create a learning network beyond their districts, but they will also earn Continuing Education Units and graduate credit from Keene State College for their work over the weekend.

The inaugural New Teachers Retreat will take place this year through a partnership with the Southwest Center for Educational Support at Keene State College in Keene, New Hampshire.

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