

Mill River Library and Tech Integration Specialist Named 2022 Vermont Teacher of the Year

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CLARENDON, Vt. - The Vermont Agency of Education is pleased to announce that **Karen McCalla**, a School Librarian/Technology Integration Specialist at Mill River Union High School, is the 2022 Vermont Teacher of the Year. Ms. McCalla will begin her tenure as Vermont Teacher of the Year on Jan. 1, 2022.

Also recognized are the 2022 Vermont Teacher of the Year Distinguished Finalists **Kyle Chadburn**, Middle Level Humanities Teacher at Orleans Elementary School and **Susannah Cowden**, Secondary Level Science Teacher at Harwood Union HS.

Karen McCalla has been a School Librarian/Technology Integration Specialist at Mill River Union High School for 19 years. At Mill River, Ms. McCalla provides opportunities for STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) enrichment through the library's makerspace, and as Vermont Teacher of the Year, she plans to focus on the importance of a hands-on STEAM education for all students. Ms. McCalla also coaches robotics for upper elementary, middle and high school students through the FIRST robotics program and volunteers as Coordinator of Member Services and Education and as a Maker Evangelist at The MINT: Rutland's Makerspace. In 2020, Ms. McCalla's robotics teams were part of a volunteer labor force that produced thousands of face shields designed at the MINT makerspace for their local hospital, ambulance crews and healthcare workers.

"Karen McCalla's advocacy for a STEAM education for all students is timely and important. The STEAM focus on technical skills and a creative mindset provides lifelong benefits for our students, in their careers and everyday lives." said **Dan French, Vermont Secretary of Education**. "Ms. McCalla is providing her students with the tools and the confidence to pursue real world solutions to real world problems."

"Karen is the type of educator every school building needs," said **Tyler Weideman, Principal of Mill River Union High School**. "She is one of those rare educators who always goes above and beyond in everything she does. She is always cheerful and ready to give a boost of confidence to any of her colleagues at every moment in the day. Given her background in technology, Karen, during diverse and challenging times, has held MRU together over the last two years, providing support to our students, teachers, and community. Karen is a fantastic educator. We are lucky to have her."

"Karen McCalla brings the INTANGIBLE to every scenario that she engages," said **David Younce, Superintendent of Schools for Mill River Unified Union School District**. "Her deliberate and focused work on behalf of our students from marginalized communities and support for work centered around educational equity is the backbone of our progress where that work is not always easy to do. Her expertise and can-do attitude set up colleagues and

events for assured success - with her behind the scenes work and support always providing the context and conditions for seamless delivery on the public side of an activity. Put more directly, if there is good work happening, it is safe to assume that Karen McCalla has been involved in some capacity. She brings that much quality and supportive expertise to each and every situation she encounters.”

Since 1964, the Agency of Education has recognized outstanding Vermont teachers through the Vermont Teacher of the Year award. As the 2022 Vermont Teacher of the Year, Ms. McCalla will serve as an advocate for the teaching profession, education and students. She is also Vermont’s candidate for the 2022 National Teacher of the Year award, sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Ms. McCalla will represent Vermont next spring for the National Teacher of the Year program, typically held in Washington D.C.

Karen McCalla will also be honored at the University of Vermont’s Outstanding Teacher Day, scheduled to be held remotely March 23, 2022. For 40 years, UVM has annually recognized outstanding teachers throughout the state. The event honors educators from each supervisory union or school district, which are invited to nominate one teacher at the elementary or middle school level, one at the secondary level, and one at the technical center level.

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