

#VAis4Learners

Innovation Network

Monthly Cohort Update - August 2020



Greetings, VaLIN Cohort 2 Team Members

Gena Keller and Pam Moran had intended to schedule a virtual meetup with the Cohort 2 Team Leads before the end of August in preparation for the school year. However, as we have talked with many of you, as well as other educators across Virginia, we realize that everyone's time under current conditions is precious in the process of opening virtual or blended school.

As such, we would like to provide you with this update of next steps as we move toward the October benchmark convening:



VaLIN Fall Sandbox Virtual Collaborations

These virtual connections will build on the areas of focus from this summer's learning by activating *micro-networks* around common focus areas.

Please fill out the short survey below to provide input on Sandbox topics. Watch for communication from ALP for invitations to join these micro-networks that are set to run mid-September through October.



Save the Date - October 7, 2020

We ask that all Cohort 2 team members hold the full day on October 7 already on the VaLIN schedule, for our next cohort-wide gathering. Your ALP coach will work with to schedule additional time after October 7. So, we are releasing the hold we had previously set on October 8.



Support from your ALP Innovation Coach

Your ALP coaches will continue to provide support to your team and the division as you continue your local innovation work. We know that no time has been more challenging and demanding of innovative approaches than this one. While your coach will certainly reach out to offer their partnership, please do not hesitate to request their assistance as you uncover potential needs.

Gena and Pam also want you to know that if you have any needs with which they can offer support, please let them know.

Thank you for your leadership in these challenging times as we seek the light at the end of this tunnel. In the midst of this uncertainty, we are inspired by the words of the late Sir Ken Robinson, who established himself as a [friend of VaLIN](#) in the first cohort:

“Life is not linear. When you follow your own true north you create new opportunities, meet different people, have different experiences, and create a different life.”

Like Sir Ken, we believe the challenges we face in current times are helping us discover opportunities to address issues of equity and engagement that we otherwise may not have experienced. Thank you for every action you are taking to ensure children are safe and have the best learning environments we can provide as we enter the 2020-21 School Year.

VaLIN 2020 Virtual Sandboxes Survey

As Gena and Pam have mentioned, the design team is in the process of building cross-regional Virtual Sandboxes to leverage the power of our network. We are trying to help team

members connect with others who have shared interests and goals as a supportive network for how you are taking on the work of innovation in your district team.

VaLIN 2020 Virtual Sandboxes Survey

While your ALP coaches know the original focus for your innovation, we also understand that your focus may have shifted. We've listed known focus areas below.

Please tell us which division you represent and identify the sandbox topics that you would be interested in joining to support your team's innovation. If we missed your focus area, please add it as an "other." We will connect with team leads about which cohorts have team members interested in these topics and invite you to join the sandbox(es) that best fits your VaLIN needs.

We encourage all members of your VaLIN team to complete this survey.



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Congratulations to the VaLIN divisions recently announced as winners of first- and second-year funding for School Innovation Planning Grants (K12SIP) from VDOE. Several divisions from both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 received funding this year (see [State Superintendent Announcement](#)) These divisions demonstrate the capacity to work systemically toward innovation by seeking opportunities to fund and implement different components of their vision for innovation. This systemic approach leverages participation in opportunities like VaLIN to give that experience increased return on investment. Here's a quick glance:



Montgomery County Public Schools (VaLIN Cohort 2) is scaling their Profile of a Graduate by developing scalable pathways for both educators and students to earn micro-credentials through an innovative high school information technology course, externships and internships. [Read more](#)



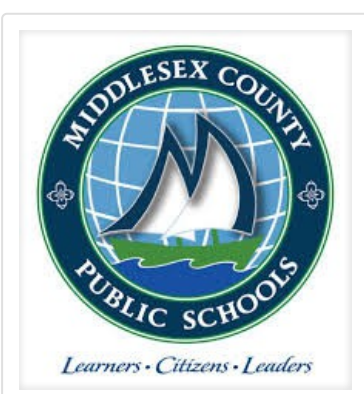
Franklin County Public Schools (VaLIN Cohort 1) has received both first- and second-year grants to support a comprehensive vision of moving towards implementing competency-based education programs. Their innovative approach provides opportunities for accelerated completion of state graduation requirements through virtual classes, integrated instruction and flexible scheduling.



Richmond Public Schools (VaLIN Cohort 2) is excited to reimagine two of their most at-promise schools with a fresh focus on career opportunities and exploration in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). The proposal includes exciting partnerships with organizations like the VCU School of Engineering Code Beats program, Capital One Coders program, and Next Up program.



Buchanan County Public Schools (VaLIN Cohort 1) was awarded a second-year grant to expand upon work they completed around blended learning. As early as this fall students will leverage a curriculum that incorporates blended, multidisciplinary courses and career-exploration opportunities, including job shadowing and internships.



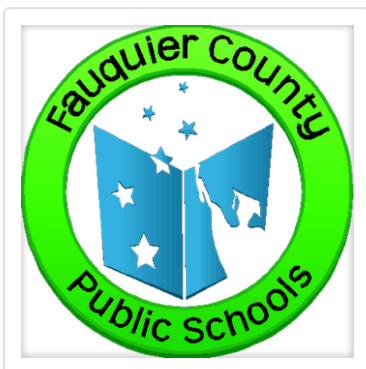
Middlesex County Public Schools (VaLIN Cohort 1) will apply their first year grant funds to expand personalized learning opportunities available to students, including additional externships and internships, that allow learners to broaden their post-secondary goals.



The Design Virginia High School Innovation Network includes **Halifax County Public Schools** (VaLIN Cohort 1), **Henrico County Public Schools** (VaLIN Cohort 2) and **Mecklenburg County Public Schools** (VaLIN Cohort 1) This network of divisions will focus on college, career and community readiness to prepare students for post-secondary experiences.



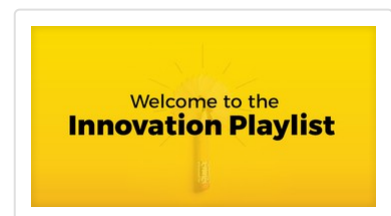
Goochland County Public Schools (VaLIN Cohort 1) will implement a project-based, interdisciplinary program through their CTE academies, with innovations that include competency-based assessment, virtualization of student learning and senior capstone projects.



Fauquier County Public Schools (VaLIN Cohort 2) will foster strong community and higher education partnerships to provide mentors for students as they focus on interdisciplinary collaboration on authentic, real-world projects.

Free for a Limited Time: Most Likely to Succeed

Ted is making *Most Likely to Succeed* available for streaming for free during the all of this craziness. The free link is available on the [Innovation Playlist](#) and also on [Vimeo](#). If any divisions are interested in planning and implementing an online Community Night discussion using *Most Likely to Succeed* and/or *What Schools Could Be*, reach out to [Becky Ellis](#) for support.



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