

#VAis4Learners

Innovation Network

Monthly Cohort Update - May 2021



VALIN Cohort 3.0 Goes Live this Summer!

ATTN: Virginia School Divisions

FROM: Virginia School Consortium for Learning & Commonwealth Learning Partnership

Since 2019, approximately 60 of the 132 Virginia divisions have benefited through their engagement in the Virginia is for Learners Innovation Network (#VALIN). **We are pleased to announce that the VALIN cohort 3.0 will launch this fall.** Up to 35 division teams will be selected to participate in a sequence of whole group, virtual and local events facilitated by experienced, skilled coaches.

Divisions across the Commonwealth are invited to submit an application between **June 10-29**. **For the first time, divisions who participated in either the 2019 or 2020 cohorts are eligible to submit proposals for potential inclusion in this year's cohort.** Interested divisions may elect to prioritize local goals that align with the Profile of a Virginia Graduate and one or more of the following themes:

- Mobilizing Community to work collaboratively toward a shared goal;
- Student-Driven Learning that supports developing and sustaining equitable student agency
- Real-World Challenges that lead to innovative, intrinsically motivated problem -solvers;
- Authentic Assessments that both capture higher-order and consequential learning;
- Caring and Connected Community that extend powerful practices essential to building social-emotional competencies and inclusive, equity-driven communities;

We sincerely invite your communities to consider participating in this powerful form of community-building and innovation. In advance of the application window, we ask that you consider the following information / action items:

- Each VALIN team may include **up to 7 members**. We recommend that division teams include district and site administrators and at least one classroom teacher. Community leaders, parents and students are also enthusiastically welcome to participate.
- Conditions permitting, we hope to host the cohort on **October 7-8, March 9 and June 22** in Chesterfield at the CTE Hull Center. We will confirm dates with cohort 3.0 teams this July.
- We sincerely thank our partners, VDOE and Ted Dintersmith, for the financial support that enables divisions to receive personalized coaching and participation at up to four cohort-wide convenings. **A fee of \$2500** will be charged to each division team to offset a fraction of expenses and nurture Network sustainability.
- **By or before June 4**, please reach out to Gena and Pam indicating an **intent to apply**. This communication does not bind your division in any formal way. Moreso, it enables the #VALIN steering committee to allocate appropriate resources toward the prompt and efficient processing of applications.

Thank you so much for your consideration and support. The 2020 cohort met for the first time one week before COVID-19 forced our communities to rapidly shift toward a virtual learning model. It is indeed a testament to Virginia's public education systems and the Commonwealth's educators that the vast majority of these teams not only maintained their membership in VALIN but also thrived.

As we look forward, we are excited for these opportunities and are eager to hear back from you.

Pam Moran and Gena Keller

Virginia Assessment Collaborative Update

The image is a collage representing the Virginia Assessment Collaborative. On the left is a screenshot of a Facebook page titled 'VaLIN Assessment Collaborative'. In the center is a large board of colorful sticky notes organized into sections: 'Our accomplishments thus far...', 'Community', 'What barriers have we encountered...', 'Our solutions to any barriers...', and 'What do we still need to do before we celebrate in June?'. Three glowing lightbulb icons are scattered around the board. On the bottom right is a video player showing a woman wearing a black face mask, with a name tag that reads 'Ms. Jacobsen'.

- A collaborative effort between VDOE, VaLIN, VaSCL, New American History, Commonwealth Learning Partnership, Advanced Learning Partnerships, and What School Could Be
- [Launched](#) April 7th, with a [Midpoint Meetup](#) on May 12th, and a final Celebration planned on June 9th.
- A separate [Scoring](#) webinar was held on April 28th with VAC and Holli Cook/Christonya Brown from VDOE.
- Online VAC community created within the [What School Could Be](#) platform to foster collaboration between divisions/coaches
- [Shared Google Drive](#) with sample VaSCL performance assessments (task/rubrics) shared for divisions that are not VaSCL task bank members. Divisions in VAC are also donating locally developed tasks for use in a future VAC Hub at [#GoOpenVA](#)
- [Coaching support](#) from ALP and Social Studies coaches, lending innovation and content expertise, via Zoom, shared [Jamboards](#), or 1-1 as requested.
- Local divisions creating [videos capturing](#) teacher/admin/student [reflections](#) on their Performance Assessment Journey

Andi Arnold: Roller Derby, Community & Diversity

Our colleague, Dean Shareski, created a [podcast](#) this spring titled *Outside the Classroom*. Each episode focuses on an educator who leads a really interesting life outside education.

Here's Dean's central premise: great teachers at their core are passionate learners who can't help but apply deep eclectic life experiences in their classrooms. In April, he welcomed Andi Arnold aka Smack Skellington to explore her journey into roller derby, the power of community and diversity.

Listen to Dean and Andi's conversation [here](#) and then meet Andi live and in person when she sits down with Amos Fodchuk and the What School Could Be Community in her very own Genius Hour.

WHEN: June 1 at 4:00-4:45 pm ET

REGISTER [HERE](#)

It's All About Talent: Hiring Educators for Deeper Learning

The *What School Could Be* community is united through a powerful vision for equitable, rich and dynamic learning that serves kids and adults. This summer, Lori McEwen and Amos Fodchuk invite you to explore and share concrete strategies taken by successful teams to realize this vision at scale.

How do you attract, select and nurture talented colleagues? What is the intersection between pedagogical skill and learner-centered values? Can we innovate within the standard interview

process?

Bring your lessons learned, tried-and-tested resources and out-of-the-box ideas to this engaging, collaborative WSCB Hands-On How-To.

WHEN: June 3 at 12:00 - 12:45 pm ET

REGISTER [HERE](#)

What is a Mastermind?

The concept of the Mastermind group is widely acknowledged to have originated from Napoleon Hill, author of *Think and Grow Rich*. A Mastermind group is any group of people who come together to share and solve problems in a supportive environment.

Mastermind groups are often characterized by a shared role or goal. In this case, the *What School Could Be* Masterminds are offered to innovative leaders looking to create or sustain student-centered, authentic learning within caring communities.

Members of the group may therefore have some similarities, but also enough differences to be able to offer varied perspectives. We seek to create groups of leaders who want to come together to improve their educational leadership practice, even if specific goals and contexts vary. The structure of a Mastermind might look like this:

- Weekly meetings of 60 minutes over a five-week period
- Each session opens with conversation around a shared reading or video
- In pairs, members share gains related to previously set goals
- Whole-group Hot Seat or Think Tank - a time for a single participant to share a dilemma or problem of practice. Using an adapted consultancy protocol, the group asks clarifying, then probing questions and finally offers suggestions and feedback.
- Commit to a personal goal
- Closing

Why should I join a Mastermind?

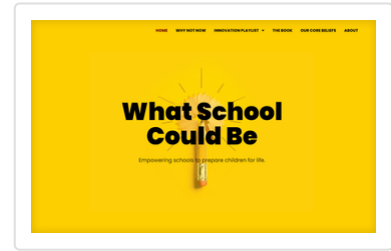
Being part of a Mastermind is right for you *if...*

- You are looking for honest conversations and are able to give and receive constructive and critical feedback in the spirit of continuous improvement;
- You believe there is value in giving and receiving feedback (and understand that you will be asked to give more than you receive);
- You seek a confidential community of action-oriented educational leaders.

Apply for WSCB Mastermind Cohort [HERE](#)

What School Could Be

Ted Dintersmith has launched a free, secure networking and resource app for educators that you can use to participate in events, connect with other innovator educators, and create and join open and closed groups that have all of the features of the main community. Several VA educator teams are already working in groups on performance assessments.



Interested? [Check out this video](#) to hear what community members are saying about their experiences.

Ready to check it out? [Use this link to join the community directly.](#) You can also download the app in iOS and Android, and visit www.whatschoolcouldbe.org to learn more about the community and join.

The www.whatschoolcouldbe.org website has also been updated with new content, including submissions from VaLIN. Another round of new content will be released in a few weeks.

For more information about any of these things, contact becky@whatschoolcouldbe.org.

Follow us on Twitter #VaLIN #VAis4Learners



About Advanced Learning Partnerships

 @alplearn

ALP is a partner, designer, and agent of change. We move beyond the expert mindset and one-size-fits-all, quick fix solutions.

 ALP@advancedpartnerships.c...

 alplearn.com

Virginia is for Learners is an initiative of the [Virginia Department of Education](#), the [Virginia School Consortium for Learning](#) (VaSCL), [The New American History Project](#) at the University of Richmond, and James Madison University with support from [Ted Dintersmith](#). Coaching is provided by [Advanced Learning Partnerships](#), [Dr. Scott McLeod](#) from the University of Colorado at Denver, and [Kaleb Rashad](#) from High Tech High Graduate School of Education.