January 27, 2022

Dear Vermont Educator,

You are cordially invited to apply to the Vermont Mathematics Initiative (VMI) Master's Degree program, a three-year professional development opportunity focusing on mathematics content, effective teaching practices, action research, and teacher leadership. Now in its twenty-third year, the VMI has over 600 educators who are either currently enrolled or recently graduated with advanced degrees. VMI graduates continue to play important roles in their schools, districts and states.

In July 2019 the VMI established itself as a nonprofit organization, formed a new partnership with Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU), and updated the curricula of existing programs. The Master's program, in particular, experienced substantive changes designed to address current research, while maintaining foundational aspects of the VMI program that have been successful since our inception.

We are pleased to offer admission to a limited number of qualified applicants each year. ***Please note that there are no prerequisite mathematics requirements for entry into the VMI program***. Just as classroom teachers are expected to help students with diverse backgrounds, strengths and needs, our faculty and staff are committed to helping all teachers--including classroom teachers, special educators, math interventionists, math teacher leaders, and administrators--develop their expertise in mathematics content, mathematics instruction, educational research, and teacher leadership.

Successful applicants to the VMI Master's program are PreK-8 teachers committed to enhancing their effectiveness as teachers of mathematics, are enthusiastic about increasing their mathematics content knowledge in a supportive environment, and are committed to sharing their increased knowledge of mathematics content and pedagogy with colleagues through mentoring, peer coaching or other forms of professional development. Through VMI coursework, classroom applications, mentoring by VMI staff, and leadership training, teachers in the VMI will earn SNHU's *Master of Education (M.Ed) degree in Educator Practices with a concentration in Mathematics Teaching*.

The application to the VMI is a two-step process that involves submitting documents and references directly to the VMI as well as applying to SNHU for formal admittance to the graduate program. The VMI application should clearly articulate how participation in the VMI will address identified school needs. ***The VMI encourages schools, especially those with larger enrollments, to submit applications for more than one teacher***. We have found that teams of teachers, ideally representing different grade levels, often support more broad-reaching systemic changes. Therefore, please share this information with colleagues.

Detailed information about the VMI is enclosed within this mailing. Completed applications are due no later than March 28th, 2022. We anticipate notifying applicants of acceptance within three weeks of the submission of the complete application,.

Thank you for your interest in the Vermont Mathematics Initiative. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Judi Laird (judi@vmimathematics.com), VMI Director, at (802) 274-0436.

Sincerely,

Judi Laird, Director
VMI

Professional Development in Mathematics for K-8 Educators

Content, Pedagogy, Action Research and Leadership

Information for VMI Applicants and School Officials -- January 2022

What is the Vermont Mathematics Initiative (VMI)?

The Vermont Mathematics Initiative (VMI) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving mathematics teaching and learning through a variety of initiatives. Now in its twenty-first year, the VMI is dedicated to supporting highly effective mathematics instruction so that all children can learn the rigorous mathematics needed for success in higher education and the workplace. More information about the VMI organization can be found at www.vmimathematics.com.

What is the VMI Master's program?

The Vermont Mathematics Initiative (VMI) Master's Program is a three-year, comprehensive mathematics professional development program. The mission of the VMI Master's program is to significantly improve the teaching and learning of mathematics in grades PreK-8 across the states of Vermont and New Hampshire. Through their VMI experience, teachers build strong mathematics content knowledge, develop the ability to conduct action research around mathematics education issues, cultivate leadership skills, and apply this acquired knowledge and skill in their classrooms and at the school or district level to improve student learning.

When and where does the program take place?

The summer courses for the 2022 Vermont cohort will be held Monday through Friday in the Burlington area during the weeks of July 11 and July 18, 2022. Academic year courses will be held on Friday/Saturday "weekends": three during the fall semester and three during the spring semester. VMI academic year courses also take place in the Burlington area. *In addition, participants engage in a series of classroom visitations by their VMI mentor and may also be required to attend online discussion forums, tutorial sessions, and topic specific seminars.*

What is the academic component of the VMI?

For each of the three calendar years a teacher is enrolled, the VMI teacher will complete 12 graduate credits through a combination of 1, 2 or 3 credit courses held during the two-week summer session and throughout the academic year. Fieldwork, including work with a VMI mentor, runs concurrently with each course. Upon completing the full three-year VMI program, a teacher will have earned 36 graduate credits and will have completed all of the requirements for a Master of Education (M.Ed) Degree from Southern New Hampshire University.

What are some of the benefits to schools that participate in the VMI?

In addition to coursework in mathematics content, pedagogy and leadership, the VMI provides support for participants in their schools. Throughout the program, VMI participants:

- Receive ongoing support from a VMI mentor who will help one transfer new and growing understandings to classroom instruction. In addition, the VMI mentor supports teacher leadership initiatives and provides advice and guidance for the research aspect of the program. Through regular contact, both in person and online, the VMI mentor offers a professional relationship that enables the participant to maximize the VMI experience.
- Have immediate access to increased mathematics content expertise through the VMI staff, which includes mathematicians, mathematics educators, and master elementary and middle level teachers experienced in professional development.
- Receive ongoing professional development for enhancing their teaching effectiveness and for preparing to take on expanded leadership roles in their schools or districts.
- Have opportunities to form partnerships with VMI staff and other participants resulting in the continuous improvement of learning opportunities for students and support for the school or district mathematics goals.

One should also note that the VMI program evaluation, conducted annually from 2004-2018, has shown that VMI teachers have attained a high degree of mathematics content knowledge and have made significant contributions to mathematics teaching and learning in their schools and across the state.

Who should apply?

All PreK-8 educators, including classroom teachers, special educators, interventionists, math coaches, and administrators are eligible for the program. Specifically, applicants must be:

- Dedicated to enhancing mathematics teaching and learning for all students.
- Enthusiastic about increasing their mathematics content knowledge in a supportive environment.
- Willing to share their increased knowledge of mathematics content and effective teaching with their colleagues through mentoring, peer coaching or other forms of professional development.
- Interested in supporting the development and implementation of their school's mathematics curriculum as well as their school's mathematics goals.
- Committed to serving as mathematics teacher leaders in their schools and to the appropriate use of local assessment results to improve instruction.

Please note many VMI assignments and projects require participants to incorporate new learning into their teaching, reflect on the effectiveness of their instruction, and modify approaches. Thus, all participants need ongoing opportunities to work directly with students in mathematics classes throughout their VMI experience.

What is the application process?

Applying to the VMI is a two-step process which is described below:

(1) completing the VMI portion of the application. This can be accessed at www.vmimathematics.com or by emailing the VMI Director, Judi Laird (judi@vmimathematics.com). Once the complete application is received, a VMI representative will confirm receipt. Applicants will be notified within three weeks of receipt of the complete application of their acceptance to the VMI program.

(2) completing the SNHU portion of the application. This process is initiated by visiting SNHU's VMI graduate application page (https://snhu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aY7i3KzAqkw7qex). SNHU will require submission of a transcript, a resume and a few other items. You will receive correspondence directly from SNHU personnel upon initiating the graduate application at the above link.

What is the cost?

With satisfactory completion of a full calendar year's courses, the VMI teacher will earn 12 graduate credits. Of those 12 credits, it is expected that the participant's district will pay for at least a portion. (This is a contractual benefit for teachers in many districts.) The remaining credits are the responsibility of the teacher.

SNHU's current tuition rate is $651 per credit; $7812 per year. Teachers in the VMI are eligible for financial aid through SNHU.

Note: ***The overall goal of the VMI is to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics in the VMI teacher's school/district. The VMI teacher and the school/district leadership will work together to help achieve that goal. For that reason, we encourage the school and district to work creatively with the VMI applicant to increase the school's or district's share of tuition and correspondingly reduce the teacher's share.***

A number of strategies have been suggested for doing so, including the following:

- Districts agree to use Covid relief funding to support a teacher, or team of teachers, attending VMI. **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief** (ESSER) Funds provide an excellent way for a school to increase leadership capacity in mathematics and consider long term, strategic approaches to addressing mathematics achievement concerns.
- A district develops an MOU with the teacher in which it agrees to pay for one or two courses over and above the Master Agreement in exchange for an agreement by the VMI teacher that they will not request any course tuition for a given time frame (e.g., three years) following completion of the VMI. The teacher further agrees to reimburse the district a prorated amount in the event the teacher chooses to depart the school during the life of the MOU period. In brief, such an agreement would give the teacher added tuition funding and at the same time would provide assurance to the district and school that their financial support would benefit the school in the long term. Both the school and the teacher benefit from this arrangement.

- Some districts pay stipends to teachers who take on leadership roles, for example, in curriculum, coaching, mentoring, etc. In this strategy, VMI participants would be able to "earn" additional tuition funding by fulfilling such roles in their schools. This arrangement has the advantage that the teacher's participation in the VMI is tied directly to school impact.
- Title IIA funds can be used to pay for additional VMI tuition, provided an appropriate plan is developed and approved by officials. This has been a very successful strategy for many VT administrators as they strive to build leadership capacity in their district.

Reminder: *Federal tax code provides a number of options for tuition as a deductible expense.*

Teachers who are interested in applying should not be deterred by questions related to cost. Please contact us if you have questions related to financing your VMI tuition.

Who is the VMI?

The VMI Leadership Team consists of the following individuals:

Judi Laird
Director and VMI Cohort 1999 Graduate

Susan Ojala
Co-Director for Mathematics Content and VMI Cohort 2000 Graduate

Robert Laird
Co-Director for Teaching/Learning and School Implementation and VMI Cohort 2000 Graduate

Other members of the instructional and mentoring staff include:

Dr. George L. Ashline, *Professor of Mathematics, St. Michael's College*
Ralph Bernardini, *Mathematics Teacher and VMI Graduate, Vergennes Union High School*
Dr. Priscilla Bremser, *Professor of Mathematics, Middlebury College*
Josh Bunker, *Mathematics Teacher and VMI Graduate, Proctor Elementary School*
Kristen Cavanaugh, *Teacher and VMI Graduate, South Burlington*
Dr. Carol J. Eckels, *retired Principal, Leicester Elementary School*
Luke Fisher, *retired Math Coach, Woodstock Elementary and VMI Graduate*
Fran Huntoon, *Mathematics Specialist and VMI Graduate*
Bill Jesdale, *retired Principal, Lincoln Community School*
Kathy Lamphier, *Math Coach and VMI Graduate*, *South Burlington*
Kiran MacCormick, *Mathematics Teacher, Mississquoi Valley HS*
Karen Nee, *Mathematics Teacher and VMI Graduate, Essex Middle School*
Sharon Pare*, Mathematics Specialist, retired Mathematics Teacher and VMI Graduate, Newport*
Dr. Gregory Petrics, *Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Northern VT University*
Tracy Renaud, *Mathematics teacher and former mathematics coach, Concord NH, and VMI Graduate*
Kathy Richardson, *Mathematics Teacher and VMI Graduate, The Putney School*
Tara Sharkey, *Mathematics Teacher, Colchester*
Ingrid Stallsmith, *Mathematics Specialist,. Hanover, NH and VMI graduate*
Sandi Stanhope, *Mathematics Specialist and VMI Graduate*
Dr. John Tapper, *Associate Professor of Elementary Education, St. Michael's College*
Dr. Julie M. Theoret, *Professor of Mathematics, Northern VT University*
Dr. Jim Wright, *Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Westfield State University (MA)*

The VMI Board of Directors consists of the following individuals:

Paul Smith, *Curriculum Director, Windham Southeast Supervisory Union*
Beth Cobb, *Superintendent, Essex-Westford Supervisory Union. VMI Board chair*
Priscilla Bremser, *Nathan Beman Professor of Mathematics, Middlebury College. VMI Board secretary*
Karen Nee, *Mathematics Teacher and VMI Graduate, Essex Middle School*
Jay Meadows, *Chief Executive Officer, Exemplars®*
Mary Lou Gross, *Former school board member, career University employee and wife of VMI founder, Kenneth I Gross.*

Application 2022

VERMONT MATHEMATICS INITIATIVE
MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

Please note that acceptance into VMI is a two-step process including the application to VMI (Parts 1-V below) *as well as* the SNHU application for admittance to the formal degree program. Your application is not complete until both processes are finished.

Completed applications must be postmarked or electronically transmitted no later than March 28, 2022. Please send your completed application to:

Vermont Mathematics Initiative, Inc.
416 Washburn Rd
East Burke, VT 05832

Or transmit electronically to the VMI at judi@vmimathematics.com

A complete VMI application includes:

- ☐ Part I: Applicant information cover sheet and current resume
- ☐ Part II: Applicant's responses to the essay questions
- ☐ Part III: (a) Three letters of recommendation, including at least one each from a colleague and an administrator
- ☐ Part IV: Applicant signature
- ☐ Part V: (a) Principal's responses to questions 1-3
  (b) Signature sheet, signed by the principal and Superintendent

Only fully completed applications will be considered.

Once you have completed the above, please initiate the process to submit your formal SNHU graduate application by clicking on this link, or pasting the link below into your browser no later than March 28, 2022:

https://snhu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aY7i3KzAqkw7qex

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact:
Judi Laird, VMI Director
judi@vmimathematics.com
802.274.0436

Vermont Mathematics Initiative Application Form
Part I: Applicant Information Cover Sheet

Please print in ink or type.

Name of Applicant_____

Email address_____

School name_____

School phone_____

School address_____

_____

Current grade level/position_____

Number of years teaching in current school_____

Total number of years teaching_____

Undergraduate & Graduate Degrees_____

_____

Educator License Endorsements_____

Home mailing address_____

_____

Home phone_____

Please attach a current resume to this application.

Vermont Mathematics Initiative Application Form
Part II: Essay Questions

Please type and attach your responses to this application.
(*Suggested length: For questions 1-5, a total of approximately 3 typed pages.*)

1. Meeting the Needs of All Students

Helping all children succeed in mathematics is a challenge faced by all educators. Please describe your commitment to helping all students succeed and your goals for enhancing your effectiveness in this area.

2. Teacher Leadership

Serving as a mathematics teacher leader is an important aspect of your participation in VMI. Please describe the key challenges in mathematics teaching and learning faced by your school and the ways in which your enrollment in VMI might help address those challenges.

3. Mathematics Content Knowledge

The VMI curriculum includes rich and challenging mathematics content which is intended to extend your understanding whether you are currently at a novice or more advanced level. Please describe your interest in expanding your mathematical content knowledge.

4. Critical Reflection

Throughout your VMI enrollment, you will be asked to critically reflect upon your teaching practices and continue to strive for excellence. Please describe your interest in utilizing an inquiry approach in your classroom practice and your openness to working collaboratively with others to improve your instruction.

5. Action Research

In the final year of the program, you will undertake an action research project on an appropriate topic of your choice. Describe the role that research plays or can play in your work with students. List particular mathematics research topics of interest to you.

6. Teaching Experience, Leadership and Mathematics Professional Development

skip this section if this information is included in your resume

Please list:

- Your teaching experience (locations, roles, levels, and lengths of time).
- Any teacher-leadership experience (serving on or leading committees, facilitating meetings/discussion groups, writing curriculum, etc.).
- Your professional development experience (as participant and/or presenter) in mathematics content and instruction (graduate courses, VCTM involvement, workshops, conferences, other). Please indicate those events in which you served as a facilitator or presenter.

Vermont Mathematics Initiative Application Form

Part III: Recommendations

Recommendations

Please include three letters of recommendation to support your participation in this project, including at least one each from a colleague and an administrator.

Recommendations should address your:

- Ability to take on challenges and to grow professionally.
- Dedication to addressing the needs of all students.
- Leadership experiences or qualities, including your commitment to working with other teachers/school personnel to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics in your school.

Part IV: Applicant Signature

Applicant Agreement

I understand that I am making a three-year commitment, that one aspect of my involvement is to play a leadership role in mathematics in my school or district, and that I will engage in classroom-based observation and feedback sessions with my VMI mentor.

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant *Date*

Vermont Mathematics Initiative Application Form
Part V: Principal's letter and signature sheet
To be completed by the school principal

Applicant Name: _____

Administrator's Name: _____

Please attach responses to this cover sheet. *Please note that the responses to these prompts can be included in the letter of recommendation.*

1. **Teaching and Learning:** Please detail how the applicant's participation in this professional development program will support the improvement of student performance in mathematics at your school.
2. **Teacher Leadership:** *VMI participants enter the program with greatly varying levels of leadership experience.* Please describe the ways in which their development as a teacher leader will support the school community goals.
3. **Administrative Support:** *We have found that consistent administrative support enhances one's success in the VMI program.* How will you support this applicant throughout their VMI career?

I have read the Vermont Mathematics Initiative application packet and discussed this application with the district Superintendent. I understand that active support of the VMI participant by the principal or other designated school leader is expected.

I understand that our district will be expected to provide release time for the participating teacher to attend VMI sessions, and pay for at least a portion of the 12 graduate credits a participating teacher will receive each year. I have read the portions of this application packet pertaining to cost and administrator support and am committed to assisting the participating teacher find the necessary funds to cover the cost.

Note: The overall goal of the VMI is to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics in the VMI teacher's school/ district. The VMI teacher and the school/ district leadership should work together to help achieve that goal. For that reason, *we encourage the school and district to work creatively with the VMI applicant to increase the school or district share of tuition and correspondingly reduce the teacher's share. A number of strategies have been suggested for doing so, which are listed under the headings* ***"What is the cost?"*** *and* ***"Financial assistance"*** *on the enclosed sheet entitled* ***"Professional Development in Mathematics for K-8 Educators."***

_____	_____
Principal Signature	Superintendent Signature
_____	_____
Date	Date