

October 26, 2007

The Vermont Adolescent Literacy and Learning Initiative (VALLI) invites applications from middle- and high schools for the 2008-09 school year. The cost for schools to participate in this three-year program is \$16,000 a year. When you read the following paragraphs, you may understand why this is such a good deal!

VALLI's goal is to transform literacy and learning school-wide through a three-year commitment.

In a school's first year, VALLI administers a faculty-wide survey to help determine areas of special focus. In this way, each school receives a custom-built program responsive to the faculty's observations of areas of need. VALLI consultants work with a cross-disciplinary Leadership Team of teachers and a school administrator, observing, modeling, and meeting regularly with the team. Consultants are also available to non-team members as requested, but the first-year focus is on developing leadership capacity within the building in the interests of meeting the very needs that the whole faculty has identified. These may include helping students develop higher order thinking skills, learning with texts in the content areas, vocabulary development throughout the curriculum, and strategies for creating self-regulated readers and writers.

In the school's second year, a fresh team of educators benefits from services similar to those offered to the first-year team, which now works with the VALLI consultants in spreading the strategies and tools that were introduced during year one.

We design a school's third year in the program based on the progress of the first two years, and adjust the fee downward to the extent that the school's leadership teams are ready to take over.

In addition to twice-monthly, day long visits from a VALLI consultant, the fee also covers:

- A three-day summer institute for the school's leadership team
- Half- and full-day professional development gatherings throughout the school year
- Free tuition for all school educators at the summer conference of our parent organization, Vermont READS Institute

Enclosed is an application form and a detailed description of the project. Please note that we have limited resources, and will be responding to applications on a first-come, first-served basis. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mary K. Grace
Director

Vermont Reads Institute at UVM
Vermont Adolescent Literacy and Leadership Initiative
2008-09 Application (Deadline: December 3, 2007)

Name of School

Your Name and Position

Your Telephone and E-Mail

Please sign and date the statement at the bottom of this page, and attach your responses to the following questions.

1. Describe the circumstances that make your participation in VALLI desirable at this time.
2. Describe your plan for an annual assessment of your work with VALLI.
3. Describe all literacy initiatives that your faculty has pursued in the last 3 years.
4. List any other faculty-wide initiatives your school has pursued in the last 3 years.
5. Please submit your school's Language Arts scores for the most recent 8th- and 10th-grade round of testing.

Your first-year Literacy Leadership Team must include a school administrator, and at least one teacher from each of the following departments: Language Arts, Science, Social Studies/History. Please list names and departments of these educators, who will attend the 3-day institute at the end of the 2008 school year. If your school is selected, we will require each participating teacher to sign the agreement between the school and VRI.

I certify this application and my understanding of the basic requirements of membership in the Vermont Adolescent Literacy and Learning Initiative.

Signature

Date

Vermont Adolescent Literacy and Learning Initiative

A three-year innovative professional development project for educators and administrators, VALLI seeks to embed research-based reading strategies within all middle- and high-school subject areas. To ensure sustainability, VALLI builds in-school expertise and resources through intensive, onsite professional development for a team of educators composed of content area teachers and a key school administrator, who become literacy leaders in their school.

Year One:

- Each participating school sends a small cohort of educators (the school's team) to a three-day summer institute to work intensively with VALLI consultants, UVM faculty, and other experts in adolescent literacy and literacy coaching. This cohort comprises a school administrator and teachers of Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science. Other content area teachers may be invited at the discretion of the school.
- The 3-day institute includes a comprehensive self-assessment, and content area specific information, with sessions dedicated to developing literacy expertise and coaching skills.
- Throughout the school year, each school team receives situated professional development at least 2 days a month from VALLI consultants, with free access to all Vermont Reads Institute professional development offerings, and the option to participate for up to 6 graduate credits.

Year Two:

- Each participating school continues to support its existing cohort, and identifies a second cohort of teachers to begin the process anew. VALLI provides situated professional development for both cohorts, with the expectation that educators in the first cohort will begin "coaching" and disseminating their own learning and expertise across the faculty.
- Both cohorts, including the administrator, will attend a 3-day summer institute similar to that described above under "Year One." This institute will again begin with a self-assessment, will provide content area specific information, and will focus on developing literacy expertise and coaching skills.
- Throughout the school year, the cohorts will receive situated professional development at least 2 days a month from VALLI consultants; have free access to all Vermont Reads Institute professional development offerings, and the option to participate for up to 6 graduate credits.

Year Three:

- With two strong cohorts actively integrating appropriate literacy practices in content area classrooms and disseminating current research and knowledge across the curriculum, the VALLI consultants will provide fewer on-site visits. In an effort to maintain the sustainability of knowledge and growth in the area of adolescent literacy, cohorts will still have access to all the professional development opportunities as in the previous years. There will be a reduction in the cost of this program in the third year.

What VALLI provides to schools:

- Three-day conference for participating educators and administrators A school wide literacy audit and report documenting areas of strength and development
- A review of baseline data for each school
- A minimum of two days a month of situated professional development with expert consultants
- In-service workshops
- Literacy coaching
- Content area specific coaching in literacy
- Free attendance at the Vermont Reads Institute at UVM Summer Institute
- Free attendance at appropriate conferences and professional development workshops
- Participants in this project can receive 1-6 graduate credits from the University of Vermont.

What VALLI requires of participating schools:

- Participation of a school administrator (e.g., principal, assistant principal, curriculum coordinator)
- The identification of content teachers to participate
- Release time for teachers to work with VALLI consultants and other cohorts once a month
- Creation of a literacy and learning steering committee
- Participation Fee
- School-wide participation in the audit
- Annual examination of a progress towards goals