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# Virginia Is For Learners Lead Innovation Network

Cohort 2.0 Overview and Summary  
March 2020 - June 2021



Ted Dintersmith's  
Edu21C Foundation



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## I. Introduction

Virginia began bipartisan work to innovate educational outcomes and accountability systems in 2013 under the leadership of the Secretary of Education, Laura Fornash. In 2014, House Delegate Tag Greason introduced HB 930 to reform Standards of Learning Assessments in grades 3-8 and it was passed into law that year. Former Delegate Greason said at the time that this law was intended to “... reduce the number of SOLs; improve the tests to encourage a sharper focus on problem solving, critical thinking, and knowledge application skills; increase flexibility for local school leaders who want to administer their own local assessments; and create a process to further evaluate and improve the SOLs.” In 2015, the Virginia Standards of Learning Innovation Committee, including bipartisan, education, and community members appointed by Governor McCaulliffe, recommended to the Virginia General Assembly that the Board of Education develop a new Profile of a Virginia Graduate and adjust the state’s diploma requirements to conform with the profile. The 2016 General Assembly subsequently approved House Bill 895 and Senate Bill 336 in furtherance of this goal. In 2018 the Virginia Board of Education released its new Profile of a Virginia Graduate. The Profile emphasized the ‘5 Cs’ of critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship. The Board of Education also emphasized the development of core skill sets in the early years of high school and established multiple paths toward college and career readiness for students to follow in the later years of high school, including opportunities for internships, externships, and workforce credentialing.

The intent of the Profile of a Virginia Graduate is to transform learning, teaching, and schooling across the Commonwealth. As Lisa Roday-- President and COO of Firelce Solutions and Virginia Learns Board member, a key foundational support for the Virginia is for Learners Innovation Network (VaLIN)-- noted, “Education fuels personal growth, fosters curiosity, and is foundational to a child’s ability to thrive and strive. Access to quality teaching should be available to every child in the Commonwealth.” This does not happen by chance.

The Profile of a Virginia Graduate requires that students demonstrate core competencies like critical thinking, collaboration, creative thinking, communication and citizenship. While the Profile of a Virginia Graduate was designed by the Virginia Board of Education to provide local school communities with a framework to inform learning as students master the Virginia Standards of Learning and work through division curricula, the Profile did not provide a roadmap for how school divisions should strategically identify, develop, revise, and align local efforts necessary for implementation of the Profile framework. School administrators and classroom educators quickly realized that the new Profile would demand innovative approaches to learning that would impact current school division policies, funding, teaching practices, use of time and school schedules, infrastructure needs, professional learning structures, communication with parents and communities, and numerous other aspects of schooling. The Virginia Department of Education

also stressed that the shift to the new Profile framework was not just a high school initiative but rather should impact all PK-12 grade levels.

After multiple conversations and a convening with the Virginia Department of Education and Jobs for the Future staff, a collective of Virginia organizations mobilized together to initiate the Virginia is for Learners Innovation Network (VaLIN), a statewide initiative intended to bring together school division design teams and foster innovation across the Commonwealth. The objective was to create a network of educators who would work together to find solutions to common challenges and share resources relevant to implementation of the Profile.

The Network was formed through funding and in-kind support. The following partners have provided Network support to one or more VaLIN cohorts.

- **Edu21C Foundation**, a national nonprofit supporting organizations whose initiatives impact K-12 learning through commitments to help schools provide great life paths to children
- **Jobs for the Future/Hewlett Foundation**, a national nonprofit focused on broadening educational and economic opportunity who serves as a Hewlett Foundation grant recipient in partnership with the Virginia Department of Education
- **Virginia School Consortium for Learning (VaSCL)**, an educational consortium of over 79 Virginia school divisions that promotes collaboration and high-quality professional learning in order to improve classroom instruction and school leadership practices
- **James Madison University**, the fiscal agent for the Virginia is for Learners Innovation Network
- **Virginia Department of Education**, the administrative agency for public school education in Virginia
- **University of Richmond New American History Project**
- **Commonwealth Learning Partnership**, an organizational umbrella of educators, higher education, and state and national nonprofit associations
- **Virginia Learns**, a foundation to support funding for educational innovation

Together, these entities united around the overarching purpose of fostering changes in Virginia school divisions that result in rigorous, challenging learning opportunities available to all learners regardless of geographic location or demographic. These changes are by design transformational of the school experience for all Virginia children, closing educational and workforce divides and cultivating ‘future ready’ students, schools, and communities across the Commonwealth.

## II. Lead Innovation Teams

Applications for VaLIN Cohort 2 opened in January 2020. School divisions that applied were asked to collectively commit to the following:

- Engage in thoughtful innovation as pioneers for the Commonwealth;
- Model openness to growth within their own team and throughout the cohort;
- Leverage their regional, local, and virtual coaching supports;
- Create and share innovation artifacts and best practices throughout the network and, ultimately, across the Commonwealth; and
- Be present at all planned Institute sessions.

Each applicant school division responded to four prompts intended to assess their readiness for participation in the cohort:

1. *What does engaging, deep, challenging learning mean to your team today?*
2. *Describe your interpretation of engaging, deep, and challenging learning that already exists in your community today.*
3. *What key strength do you predict your team will bring to the cohort's collective success?*
4. *What critical need do you anticipate other lead teams and the facilitators can help you address?*

In all, 35 school divisions were selected for Cohort 2 (see Table 1), increasing in number from the 31 that had joined as members of Cohort 1. These division teams represent a broad cross-section of Virginia school systems that came from all eight Superintendent's Regions of the Commonwealth. School divisions of all sizes were represented in Cohort 2, ranging from small school systems (0 to 2,000 students) to very large school systems (more than 50,000 students). The average school division percentage of free- and/or reduced-price lunch students in Cohort 2 was 55%, with a range of 23% to 100%.

These 35 school divisions created 30 Lead Innovation Teams, with some of the smaller school divisions partnering together to maximize their networking potential. Each Lead Innovation Team selected 6 team members to represent the division(s). Team members consisted of superintendents and central office administrators, principals, instructional coaches, classroom teachers, parents, higher education faculty, and other school community members.

**Table 1. VALIN Cohort Participants**

| Region               | School Division              | Student Enrollment | FRL% |
|----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|------|
| 1. Central Virginia  | Chesterfield County          | 50k+               | 38   |
| 1. Central Virginia  | CodeRVA Regional High School | 0-2k               | 26   |
| 1. Central Virginia  | Hanover County               | 10k-20k            | 23   |
| 1. Central Virginia  | Henrico County               | 50k+               | 45   |
| 1. Central Virginia  | New Kent County              | 2k-5k              | 24   |
| 1. Central Virginia  | Richmond City                | 20k-35k            | 74   |
| 2. Tidewater         | Chesapeake City              | 35k-50k            | 40   |
| 2. Tidewater         | Essex County                 | 0-2k               | 84   |
| 2. Tidewater         | Isle of Wight County         | 5k-10k             | 35   |
| 2. Tidewater         | Norfolk City                 | 20k-35k            | 73   |
| 2. Tidewater         | Northampton County           | 0-2k               | 79   |
| 3. Northern Neck     | King & Queen County          | 0-2k               | 64   |
| 3. Northern Neck     | King William County          | 2k-5k              | 29   |
| 3. Northern Neck     | Mathews County               | 0-2k               | 46   |
| 3. Northern Neck     | Stafford County              | 20k-35k            | 33   |
| 4. Northern Virginia | Fairfax County               | 50k+               | 31   |
| 4. Northern Virginia | Fauquier County              | 10k-20k            | 27   |
| 4. Northern Virginia | Shenandoah County            | 5k-10k             | 47   |
| 5. Valley            | Amherst County               | 2k-5k              | 55   |
| 5. Valley            | Campbell County              | 5k-10k             | 49   |
| 5. Valley            | Nelson County                | 0-2k               | 52   |
| 5. Valley            | Staunton City                | 2k-5k              | 58   |
| 5. Valley            | Waynesboro City              | 2k-5k              | 62   |
| 6. Western Virginia  | Botetourt County             | 2k-5k              | 27   |
| 6. Western Virginia  | Montgomery County            | 5k-10k             | 37   |
| 6. Western Virginia  | Pittsylvania County          | 5k-10k             | 62   |
| 7. Southwest         | Bristol City                 | 2k-5k              | 89   |
| 7. Southwest         | Lee County                   | 2k-5k              | 94   |
| 7. Southwest         | Norton City                  | 0-2k               | 93   |
| 7. Southwest         | Radford City                 | 0-2k               | 45   |
| 7. Southwest         | Scott County                 | 2k-5k              | 65   |
| 8. Southside         | Appomattox County            | 2k-5k              | 49   |
| 8. Southside         | Greensville County           | 2k-5k              | 99   |
| 8. Southside         | Lunenburg County             | 0-2k               | 79   |
| 8. Southside         | Nottoway County              | 0-2k               | 91   |

### III. Network Model

Over the course of their VaLIN experience, Lead Innovation Teams were expected to identify (and begin to operationalize) local actions related to deeper learning, expanded equity, and increased learner engagement strategies foundational to the Commonwealth's Profile of a Virginia Graduate outcomes. Although the implementation team helps facilitate the network's activities, the VaLIN work is necessarily collaborative and driven by local school division needs.

#### Foundational Engagement Strategy

- **Pre-Planning** - Members of the VDOE, VaSCL, and ALP facilitation team (including pertinent experts) assemble to develop / refine the project plan, resources and logistics for each cohort.
- **Kick-Off Regional, Local, and Virtual Seminars** - Regional cohorts convene for one (1) full-day visioning event. In alliance with their assigned coach, the cohort will participate in one of three District-based planning sessions as well as up to three virtual seminars.
- **Mid-Point Regional, Local, and Virtual Seminars** - Cohorts convene for one full-day planning event in their regional hubs. Additionally, they participate in one of three District-based planning sessions as well as up to three virtual seminars.
- **Culminating Regional, Local, and Virtual Seminars** - Cohorts convene for one final full-day planning event in their regional hubs. Additionally, they participate in one of three District-based planning sessions as well as up to three virtual seminars.

#### 2020-2021 Implementation Timeline

| <b>Phase 1</b><br>Understanding the Challenge<br><br>Mar - May 2020                                                                                                                               | <b>Phase 2</b><br>Designing Solutions<br><br>June - Aug 2020                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Phase 3</b><br>Taking Action<br><br>Sept - Dec 2020                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Phase 4</b><br>Amplifying Successes<br><br>Jan - Mar 2021                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Teams identified opportunities to promote deeper learning, active engagement, and equity within their communities. Response to the pandemic resulted in rapid expansion of most urgent solutions. | Teams expanded plans to advance 'small steps to big change' that bring the Profile to life in their districts. Virtual pathways aligned to shared areas of focus united members of Cohorts I and II in collaborative learning. | Teams implemented, tested, and refined innovation designs in their district. Members engaged in cycles of action and reflection within cross-district 'sandbox' teams that encouraged ongoing iteration and alignment of practice. | Teams applied lessons learned from their design solutions into scale-up plans that expanded the impact of their innovations. Efforts culminated in actionable and contextualized paths to activate the Profile. |

### **Phase 1: Understanding the Challenge (March-April 2020)**

**On March 2, 2020, over 180 Virginia education leaders [began their journey](#)** as the cohort convened in Chesterfield. Teams began to work together to unpack a vision for local implementation of the Profile of a Virginia Graduate and identify division opportunities surrounding the urgency for purposeful learning.

**The second session of the 2-day launch saw teams continuing their design** in regional groups facilitated by coaches from Advanced Learning Partnerships. By day's end, each team had generated personalized plans for realizing the Profile of a Virginia Graduate via change catalysts aligned to the Innovation Playlist.

**No fewer than ten days later, all K-12 schools in Virginia were mandated to close to in-person learning** in response to the continued spread of novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. The echoes of this shift permeate throughout each and every team's engagement as a member of VaLIN Cohort 2, with the pandemic response becoming a catalyst for change in its own right.

**Throughout the spring, school teams partnered with their ALP Innovation Coaches** for support with their most urgent needs, utilizing the weekly [#VaLINchat](#) on twitter throughout the spring as a means of staying connected to each other and the goals of the cohort.

### **Phase 2: Designing Solutions (May-July 2020)**

**In accordance with local, state, and national guidelines**, the VaLIN Steering Team collaborated to reconceptualize the Summer Institute previously planned for July 23.

**[This calendar](#) frames the myriad virtual learning experiences offered throughout June and July** in support of Innovation Team efforts to activate the Profile of a Virginia Graduate through project focus on equity, deeper learning, and active engagement. These opportunities address focus areas essential to innovation and are relevant to educators planning equitable, engaging deeper learning experiences by design, no matter the learning location.

**This Summer Learning Series (lovingly described at the time as Virtual VaLIN)** set the stage for the 'Birds of a Feather' opportunities that would follow in Fall 2020, culminating in [a network-wide virtual experience](#) that offered each team the opportunity to share their design's current state as they learned from each other's process.

### **Phase 3: Taking Action (August 2020 - February 2021)**

**Throughout August and September, teams continued to collaborate** with their Innovation Coach in support of transitioning their innovative ideas into innovative action. The desire to unite around shared themes of practice contributed to the design of [the October 7th virtual convening](#),

during which team members joined one of six [Birds of a Feather sessions](#) to further expand their network in their chosen arena.

**These virtual Birds of a Feather connections launched [a winter learning series](#) of their own,** building on the areas of focus from the summer's learning by activating micro-networks / action teams that were thematically aligned to shared goals. These micro-networks / action teams were invited to work together around design, implementation, and reflection in support of one another's approaches to innovation.

#### **Phase 4: Amplifying Successes (March 2021 - July 2021)**

**Spring 2021 found each team on a continuum of phases of implementation** of their innovation, essentially categorized into three different states. Teams were either a) on the precipice of implementation, b) in the midst of initial implementation, or c) engaged in one or more iteration cycles of their innovation.

**As a means of inviting the Network to reinforce each other's efforts,** the [March convening event](#) invited teams to serve as panelists to share both the process and outcomes of their approach with other interested peers. [Voices of VaLIN podcasts](#) served as an analogous approach within an asynchronous format. These sessions were intended to catalyze each team's movement in adherence with the VaLIN Network's mantra: *Small Steps. Big Change. Deeper Learning. Together.*

**Throughout the spring, teams channeled their efforts toward realizing their implementation goals** and [capturing the story of those innovations](#) in a variety of formats. [This website](#) serves as the 'culminating artifact' of Cohort 2's journey, organizing these stories of innovation around their shared catalysts of change such that future cohorts can learn from these innovations in support of their own local efforts.

## **Process Improvements from Cohort 1 to Cohort 2**

- **Clarified Intended Outcomes** - The design team focused outcomes on district development of story-driven, resource-rich artifacts to be curated into a thematically aligned collection of Innovation Pathways.
- **Provided Pre-Launch Coaching** - Innovation coaches connected with teams throughout February 2020 to unpack their district's applications and level-set around expectations for engagement within the Network.
- **Led Design Using Innovation Framework** - Team-based design was anchored by a research-based Innovation Framework authored by the implementation team and informed by Cohort I division teams.
- **Leveraged Virtual Engagement** - The crisis that unfolded less than two weeks after 2020 launch led to opportunities to learn together virtually, including a Spring twitter chat

(#VaLINchat), Summer Virtual Pathways, and the launch of ‘birds of a feather’ micro-networks throughout the fall and winter.

- **Ensured Leadership Involvement** - VaLIN Steering Committee members provided direct support of district leadership and the team’s appointed lead to ensure consistent communication and engagement.

## Anticipated Improvements for Cohort 3.0

Through the Profile of a Virginia Graduate and the aligned 5 Cs, VaLIN is redefining innovation and networking within, between, and among districts. VaLIN’s personalized coaching model has introduced and continues to reinforce progressive, aligned professional learning outcomes. In this way, Virginia is modeling for adults what it seeks for its children.

- **Activate Agile Networks** - Work closely with VDOE to leverage swarm / hive networks to support sustainable professional learning needs.
- **Apply Lessons Learned from Pandemic Response** - Model the scaled implementation of progressive professional collaboration & innovation.
- **Leverage Cohort I and II Work Products** - Utilize the culminating product from 2020-2021 implementation as an accelerator that helps districts identify entry points.
- **Codify Innovation Framework** - Systematize the Innovation Framework as a road map toward activating change. This Framework can serve as visible milestones for districts building scaled capacity around the Profile of a Virginia Graduate and the aligned 5 Cs.
- **Empower Equitable Readiness for Collective Impact** - The launch of Cohort 3.0 represents actualization of a ‘tipping point’ to leverage next-generation support from VDOE and organizations like the Commonwealth Learning Partnership.

The pandemic offers a multi-generational chance to reimagine and scale learning models that authentically empower deeper learning, equity, and active engagement. Applying this year’s innovation in the 2021-22 cohort will produce a tipping point toward sustainable regional outcomes.

## IV. Outcomes and Impact

As referenced in the summary report for VaLIN Cohort 1, assessing the success of a program like VALIN in a quantifiable way will always be a challenge. By design, it will likely take several years to identify and understand the long-term impacts on students and communities of this school redesign and innovation work. Additionally, the target competencies of the new Profile of a Virginia Graduate - the '5 Cs' of critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and citizenship - are not as easily measured as more traditional student learning outcomes of rote factual recall and procedural regurgitation. Divergent thinking and interpersonal skills are not easily reduced to fixed-response assessments.

That said, in terms of investment in and realization of new processes and structures both at a local and statewide level, VaLIN continues to serve as a powerful avenue for achieving the Virginia General Assembly's student diploma requirements. Success measures below provide an overview of participant feedback on their experiences as members of the cohort as well as work products resulting from each participating team's efforts.

### Ongoing Participant Feedback Around Professional Learning

Charts 1-3 below show participant feedback before and after professional learning sessions focused on developing understanding and applications of the Profile of a Virginia Graduate as supported through equity, deeper learning, and active engagement strategies.

**Chart 1. Perceptions of VALIN Participants Before/After Sessions (average scores)**

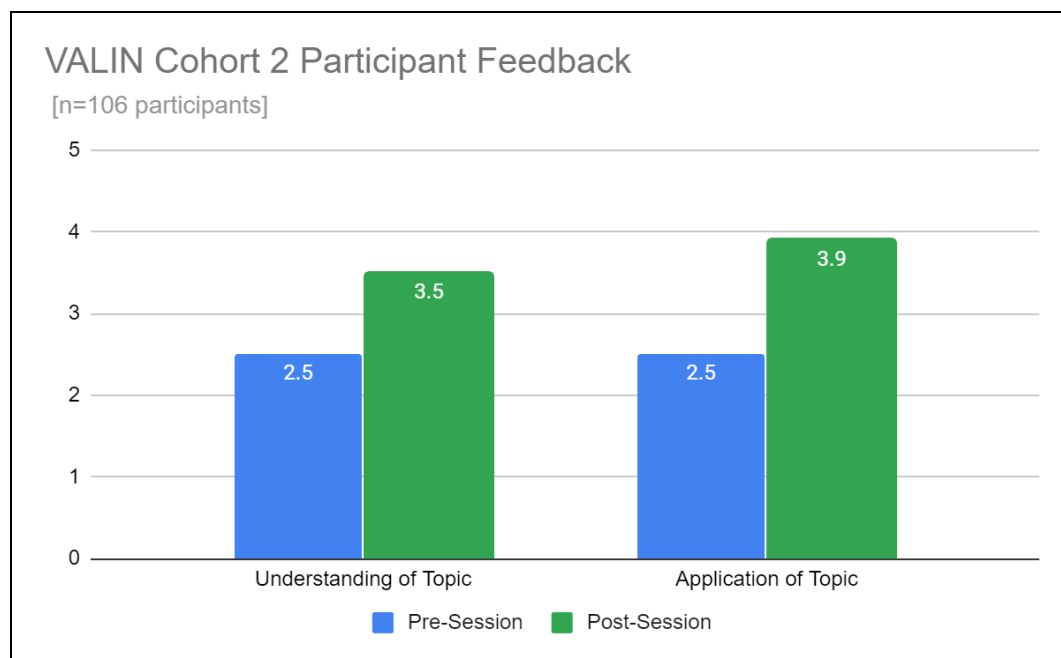


**Chart 2. VaLIN Participants' Perceived Understanding Before / After Sessions**

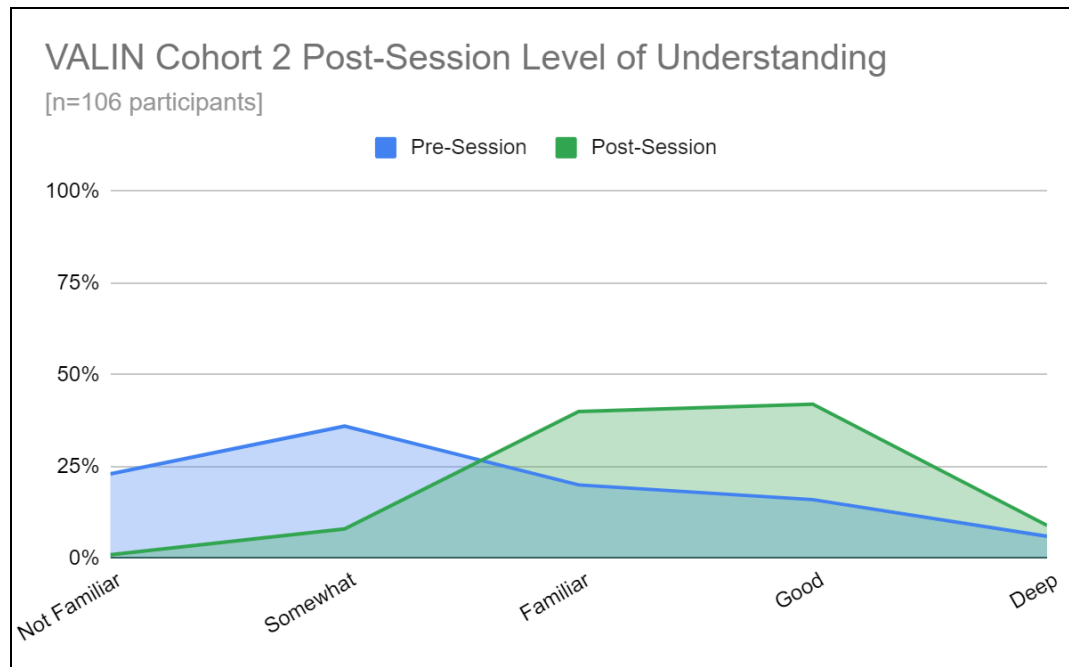
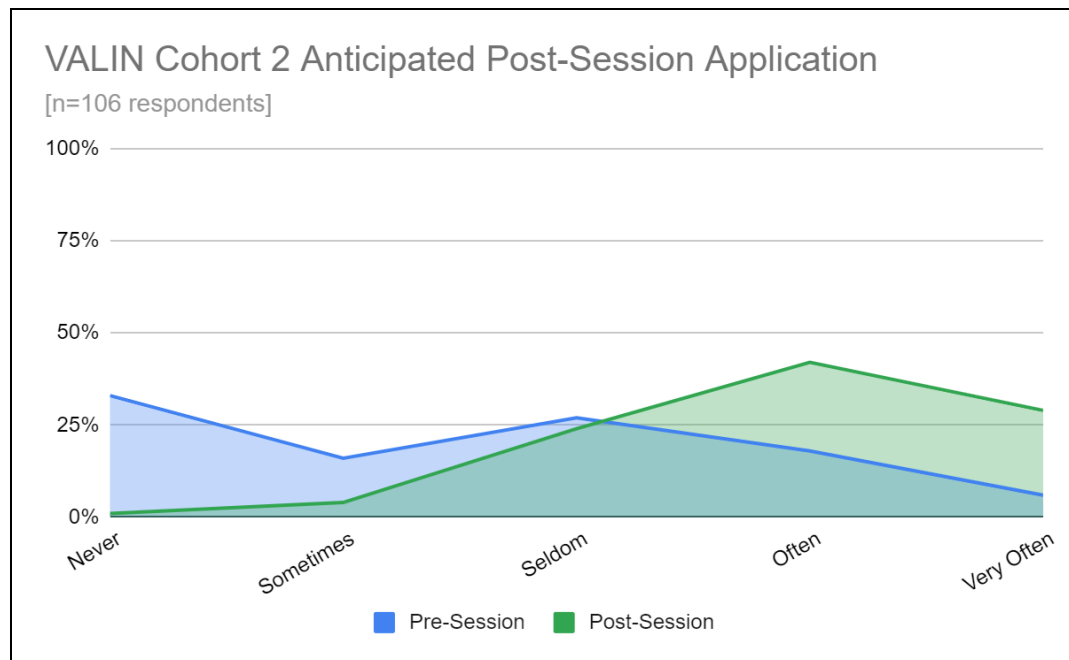


**Chart 3. VaLIN Participants' Anticipated Application Before / After Sessions**



## Participant Feedback on Impactful Session Characteristics and Facilitator Actions

- *The systematic approach to addressing the focus that was selected prior to attending the launch made the most impact. Using the flowchart approach helped to see where we are and where we are headed. It also allowed us to identify instances where we were jumping too far ahead and skipping steps in the process.*
- *It was helpful to talk through how the logistics and decisions around remote learning impact the opportunities for Deeper Learning. We discussed the pros and cons of in-person, virtual and hybrid approaches as well as the logistics involved which provided great insight into the priorities of the district.*
- *Our division was not sure where to continue with our project plan, but after our sessions, I believe I feel much more confident in my role and how I can make suggestions for how to guide our PD planning process. I also plan to continue working on rough drafts of communication plans and expanding the network to vertically align our missions and to best understand the students who are coming to us from the middle school. The communication between schools will assist teachers in filling gaps in student progress and to help teachers align tools that can best help students. It will be important for teachers and students to have the confidence to use remote learning as a beneficial tool to help students get and stay on track with courses and learning.*
- *I think the facilitator did a wonderful job explaining and answering questions. I loved the use of the breakout rooms. It was easy to follow along with as well as follow the agenda.*
- *Our coach had great resources and his discussion flowed. It was easy to follow and he was very friendly and personable.*
- *Kaleb Rashad helped to frame the "why" in regards to the importance of moving our schools into examinations that push our students out of their comfort zones academically by providing them with opportunities to solve real world problems that have relevance to their lives. As an employee of a high needs, urban, predominately black school district, much of his focus on social and environmental justice spoke directly to the situations I encounter frequently. Our coach checked in with our team frequently and helped to push our discourse forward in meaningful ways. We are facing a constricted timeline and require these nudges in order to make sure we are not bogging down in the weeds.*
- *The facilitator was effective at helping guide us through the process and keeping our focus. They also shared examples of ways various schools have incorporated the concepts of VALIN to change the culture of their schools and increase student outcomes. I was also very impressed with the panel of VALIN Cohort 1. It is always encouraging to get testimonies of people who have been there and done that!*
- *The facilitators explained the actions of student lead innovation and active participation in innovative learning techniques. I have realized that I lead my classes in this manner every day and am looking forward to improving and utilizing techniques described, in the cohort, at a more vigorous level.*

- *Kaleb provided an energetic and inspiring presentation on equity in school districts. He also provided activities that can be used to create synergy in a team. Our coach provided insightful and engaging coaching to our team. This individualized coaching allowed our team to better scope out our problem and innovation solution.*
- *Actually talking to the other schools and with our own team increased my understanding more than anything else.*
- *In forming a vision, in tracing paths of innovation in a more systematic way, soliciting feedback from all stakeholders, and affirmation that the work needed is the work we have started! Making sure our students have access to engaging and forward thinking learning experiences is a priority for our students and the support of VaLIN will assist us in providing that!*

### **Participant Perspectives on School / District Benefits from Engagement in VaLIN**

- *[VaLIN] gave additional layers we need to be mindful of to enhance the skills of our teachers and school leaders*
- *This training prompts our team to think intentionally about innovation. It gives us focus for our next steps and ideas from networking with other divisions.*
- *We expect to see a number of tangible outcomes: deeper thinking for students, additional teacher autonomy, collaboration in division, students learning "how" to learn, student engagement, teacher retention, and more.*
- *I believe the professional growth our team has and will have through this program is going to improve instruction and assessment in my district. With PBL and performance tasks as our focus, we can assist teachers in various assessment options and blended learning.*
- *Our initiative is to help increase student centered learning and increase performance based tasks. This will help us to understand how to assess those tasks and provide us with tools that we can build on.*
- *I think that participating in the VaLIN Cohort will help to keep us moving towards our goals in regards to the STEM Schools. Additionally, I am hoping we can rely on the facilitators to act as additional voices who might bolster the opinions and actions of those who are on the ground with the administrators at the building and district level.*
- *Collaboration between administrators in other divisions, an out of the box mindset, and opportunities to challenge ourselves*
- *I believe this program will make people more aware of the necessary shift in the way we teach children. It will make a difference in preparing our students for the real world after they leave us.*
- *I hope that creating a team that is focused on innovative ideas will allow the district to move toward more innovative ideas. I hope the team can proliferate the concept of celebrating failure and encouraging ideas throughout the entire district. With the assistance of our coach, we can bring about innovative and lasting change to the district.*

- *Innovation takes guts and strong support, especially when resistance to change and innovation is pretty strong within our district. This program will encourage us to think out of the box with essential support to design accountability measures to promote confidence in our stakeholders.*
- *I think this meeting is helpful to aid in my confidence to ask the necessary questions to move VALIN forward and to connect it to what the division is already doing. It helped me to gain an understanding of my thoughts and how to express them with confidence to our leaders. It also provided me with some pathways to extend the learning and to expand the network.*
- *We have more resources to use that will help demonstrate a new way of thinking to the teachers with the hope that they will put forth the effort to share with their students*
- *I feel that implementing authentic learning will greatly increase student understanding and engagement. When we teach in this manner it seems to turn into something that truly sticks with the kids for years to come.*
- *It will help everyone in my district to finally realize that the Profile of a Graduate and the 5 C's are the responsibility of ALL members of our division----not just CTE teachers.*

## VaLIN Innovation Team Project Artifacts

All told, 24 of the 35 school divisions that joined VALIN Cohort 2 in March 2020 completed a full year of project development and implementation actions through June 2021. Given the volatile nature of the 2020-21 school year, eleven of the school divisions dropped out of the cohort due to change in leadership or competing priorities that were unanticipated when their applications were submitted.

The following collection of artifacts offers a brief overview of each team's focus for their innovation projects, organized around the Edu21C Innovation Playlist Change Catalyst most aligned to each division team's efforts. Associated hyperlinks provide access to case studies, presentations, videos, podcasts, and other mixed media artifacts that offer additional depth of context around the team's project.

## Change Catalyst 1: Mobilize The Learning Community

### Mobilize By Defining Shared Vision

#### **King and Queen, King William, and Mathews - [Operationalizing the 5Cs](#)**

The goal of this multi-district team's efforts: to guide division-level and school-level leaders to unpack and operationalize the 5 C's. As a result, leaders can better support classroom teachers in navigating and implementing authentic, deeper learning opportunities at all levels in their work to support students as they grow in their acquisition of life-ready skills.

**Stafford County - [SCPS Portrait of a Graduate](#)**

Over the course of participation in VaLIN 2.0, the Stafford team focused on beginning to outline what the SCPS-specific profile of a graduate / learner / educator would look like. The following illustrates those skills and qualities that teachers and leaders will both model and teach to students so that each of these personal statements will be true by the time a student graduates. They incorporate the 5Cs of the Portrait of a Graduate as well as those adopted by Stafford in its original adoption of the C5W continuum.

**Mobilize By Activating the Vision****Chesterfield County - From Design to Impact ([Case Study](#) and [Voices of VALIN Podcast](#))**

As part of their innovation journey, Chesterfield identified the need to set the stage for innovation to take place. In their strategic plan, Chesterfield promises to “ignite passion through authentic and captivating experiences.” The way to advance this ignition is through their Infinite Learner 6 Cs. By focusing their innovation on revamping their School Improvement and Innovation Process, they are creating the conditions for innovation to take root and thrive.

**Richmond City - RPS DREAMS [Innovation Framework](#) and [Sample Innovations](#)**

RPS’s innovation journey began with their efforts to create STEM Academies within two of their middle schools. It quickly became apparent to them that this work was having an impact on their learners and RPS needed a way to replicate it within existing bandwidth. Leveraging the VALIN Innovation Framework as a model, RPS designed their own DREAMS Innovation Process, which is now being leveraged to scale innovation across the division.

**Change Catalyst 2: Student Driven Learning****Reimagine Student Learning Experiences****Amherst County - Project-Based Learning ([Presentation](#) and [Voices of VALIN Podcast](#))**

Via their presentation alongside the Voices of VALIN podcast episode with Superintendent Dr. Rob Arnold, Amherst County shares the story from moments of a year of innovation. In the summer of 2020, their partnership with WSET enabled student production teams to develop and manage a televised series of engaging lessons aligned to universal themes. Later in the year, a focus on PBL led to development of a website that showcases selected student artifacts from each of the division's schools for public viewing.

**New Kent County - [Summer of MORE \(Meaningful Opportunities for Real World Engagement\)](#)**

New Kent County leveraged a 5Es approach to build commitment as they reinvent the summer learning experience to reactivate the joy for learning. The Summer of MORE (Meaningful Opportunities for Real World Engagement) is a multifaceted experience for both learners and teachers, with thematic units that activate the 5Cs and PLC structures that foster risk-taking and leadership opportunities.

## **Empower Educators to Unleash Student Potential**

### **Chesapeake City - Empowering Educators ([Voices of VALIN Podcast](#))**

During a review of their efforts from the 2020-21 school year, Chesapeake City's innovation team brought to light a theme of empowering educators to provide a greater level of real-life application to student learning experiences. In this Voices of VaLIN podcast episode, Dr. Sheli Porter discusses some of the realizations gleaned from their leadership efforts.

### **Nelson County - Pathways for Professional Learning ([Voices of VALIN Podcast](#))**

The Nelson team worked collaboratively to reimagine approaches to professional learning via empowering our educators in Lead Innovation Teams. The initiative included a rebranding of their division-wide focus within pathways of learning, ensuring relevant learning experiences that will engage students and help them develop a passion for learning. The goal of these Lead Innovation Teams is to transform student learning from the abstract to the meaningful.

### **Norfolk City - Establishing a Community of Practice for Concurrent Instruction [Case Study](#)**

Norfolk Public Schools, like so many, shifted their innovation during the year to meet both present and future learning. The innovation is focused on the return to school that provides an optimal experience for all learners whether in person and virtual but also is shaping instruction to be more aligned to best practice around engagement and empowerment of students.

### **Staunton City - SCS University [Case Study](#), [Presentation](#), and [Video Overview](#)**

Continuous learning is an embedded process in any innovation. Staunton City Schools developed and upscaled SCS University, a collaborative peer-to-peer training that allows for personalized learning around an identified focus and need. This same concept could be applied across divisions and across innovative practices.

## **Align Systems to Support Student Agency**

### **Hanover County - Electives Pathway Exploration [Case Study](#)**

Despite the changes students were to experience in the fall of 2020, the Hanover team was able to fold the thinking of multiple elective choices within a new middle school schedule. The team created a new component in the schedule called Academic Curriculum Enrichment Block (ACE). Eventually, ACE attempted to realize what the team had initially set out to do in March 2020: to give students a chance to explore multiple elective choices.

**Henrico County - [Journey Toward Life Ready Framework](#)**

Henrico's story centers on how the pandemic supercharged their advance towards a deeper learning focused Teaching and Learning Framework through rapid prototyping, testing, failure, and survival. The key innovation is the Practitioner's Guide for Design and Delivery that was designed to support teachers in either virtual or in-person environments. Essentially, this resource is the guide to HCPS best practices expectations for Life Ready instruction.

**Radford City - [Reimagining School Scheduling](#)**

The driving question of Radford City's Innovation Team: *Can we create a schedule that allows teachers to collaborate, plan, and prepare for the integration of problem/project based learning?* Review the slide deck that chronicles the team's journey in order to understand their path as well as to access resources associated with their implementation.

## **Change Catalyst 3: Real World Challenges**

### **Classroom / School-Based Innovation**

**Montgomery County - MCPS Tech Internship [Video](#)**

The MCPS Tech Internship program offers students a real-world learning experience that prepares them for future endeavors in the field of cyber security. The team is leveraging the Profile of a VA Classroom to map out connections between cybersecurity students and content experts, identify what personalized learning looks like in these classrooms, and develop assessments that connect students to the real world while focusing on equity for non-traditional cybersecurity students.

**Shenandoah County - Bringing SCALE to Life [Video](#)**

The Shenandoah VaLIN team worked this year to continue to bring SCALE (Shenandoah County Advanced Learning Environments) to life. The initiative's goal is to support expansion of career and work-based experiences through continued collaboration with local community agencies, business partners, and higher education institutions.

**Waynesboro City - Students Solving Community Challenges [Presentation](#)**

The Waynesboro City team focused its efforts on a pair of initiatives (Waynesboro High School's *Students Solving Community Challenges* program and Kate Collins Middle School's *Waynesboro Educational Farm*) that both incorporated opportunities for real world learning and community engagement within the context of the student experience.

## **District-Wide Expansion and Alignment**

### **Bristol City - Bearcat Bridge ([Presentation](#) and [Voices of VALIN Podcast](#))**

Bristol City collaborated with the local Chamber to establish a program that prepares and recognizes high school students who demonstrate career and workforce readiness skills. Students are mentored, participate in an advisory period where they create and maintain a digital portfolio, and gain access to work-based learning opportunities and a spring Job Fair. Successful students receive the Chamber's Seal of Excellence on their diploma.

### **Nottoway County - E3: Expose, Explore, Experience ([Case Study](#) and [Voices of VALIN Podcast](#))**

The Nottoway team's Innovation Focus is best summed up as E3 -- Expose, Explore, Experience. Their goal is to expose, reveal, and introduce careers and opportunities to elementary students as they develop curiosity and interests. As students progress through middle school, they explore career pathways, begin to make choices and identify job preferences. E3, at the high school level, involves an active living model where students investigate and become immersed in career and real-life learning experiences.

## **Change Catalyst 4: Authentic Assessments**

### **Classroom / School-Based Innovation**

#### **Greenville County - Launching Performance Tasks [Presentation](#) and [Voices of VALIN Podcast](#)**

Greenville County is a Year 1 Innovation Team from Cohort II, with an initial innovation goal to increase project-based tasks and student-centered learning in the classroom. They present a story of excitement in the beginning, how they experienced both hardships and successes, and how they changed their innovation to work for their school district during the pandemic.

### **District-Wide Alignment**

#### **Fairfax County - Transforming Student-Led Assessment [Video](#)**

How has Fairfax County Public Schools attempted to adapt instructional practices to shift with changing times? Experience the journey of trailblazing schools that are shifting instruction to provide experiences where students learn, develop, and showcase their growth in "Portrait of a Graduate" skills through student-led Presentations of Learning. See the journey from initial concept, planning, teacher shifts, roadblocks, and adjustments that will allow these practices and assessment strategies to be the norm for all students, and how partnership with a state cohort will help propel the initiative.

## **Change Catalyst 5: Caring and Connected Communities**

### **Supporting Communities of Learners**

#### **CodeRVA Regional High School - [Promoting Student Agency via 9GA](#)**

CodeRVA's design builds on next-generation high school models across the nation that rethink the use of time and space, leverage technology to personalize and accelerate learning, and redesign curriculum to align with competency-based progressions. CodeRVA's team identified the need to create a formal Ninth Grade Academy (9GA) to facilitate the transition not only to high school, but to CodeRVA's unique learning environment.