



December 2024

Dear Vermont Educator,

You are cordially invited to apply to the Vermont Mathematics Initiative (VMI) Master's Degree program. Now in its twenty-sixth year, the VMI has served over 700 educators, who are either currently enrolled or recently graduated with advanced degrees, representing over 95% of all school districts in Vermont. VMI graduates continue to play important roles in their schools, districts, and in statewide professional development organizations.

Successful applicants to the VMI Master's program are PreK-12 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 Vermont State University's (VTSU) Master of Education (M.Ed) degree.

The first step in the application process involves completing the application to the VMI. There are several ways to complete the application:

- complete the online application on the next several pages;
- download the application from the VMI website, complete it and mail it via USPS;
- download the application from the VMI website, complete it, scan and email it:

Once accepted to the VMI program, you will receive more information regarding VTSU's process for formal admission to the master's program.

Detailed information about the VMI is included in the next few pages. We encourage you to review the information prior to completing the application. Completed applications should be submitted by March 30, 2025. After March 30, 2025, we will accept applications based on available seats in the cohort.

We anticipate notifying applicants of acceptance within three weeks of receipt 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, VMI Director

*Each year a limited number of high school teachers are admitted to the program. Interested high school teachers should contact Judi Laird (judi@vmimathematics.com) or Susan Ojala (susan@vmimathematics.com) to discuss details.



Professional Development in Mathematics for K-12 Educators Content, Pedagogy, Action Research and Leadership Information for VMI Applicants and School Officials

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-fifth 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. The VMI includes degree and certificate programs, professional development workshops and courses, and mathematics support for Vermont's schools. 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-12 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?

New cohorts start each summer with a two week immersion held on the VTSU campus in Williston, VT. The summer courses for the 2025 cohort will be held Monday through Friday during the weeks of July 7 and July 14, 2025.

Academic year courses are held on Friday/Saturday "weekends": three during the fall semester and three during the spring semester. VMI academic year courses also take place on the VTSU campus in Williston.

Additionally, participants engage in a series of classroom visitations by their VMI mentor and may also be required to attend occasional online discussion forums, tutorial sessions, and topic specific seminars.

To support educators who live outside of Chittenden County, the VMI makes double occupancy hotel rooms available at no cost to the participant. Single rooms are available by request with participants expected to pay half the room rate. Lunch is provided each day of class.



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 Vermont State 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-12* 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.

***Is the Master’s Program for High School teachers?**

Yes. Each year a limited number of high school teachers are admitted to the program. Interested high school teachers should contact Judi Laird (judi@vmimathematics.com) or Susan Ojala (susan@vmimathematics.com) to discuss details.

What is the application process?

Applying to the VMI is a two-step process as 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, applicants will be notified within three weeks of their acceptance to the VMI program.

(2) Upon notification of acceptance to the VMI, applicants are prompted to then complete the VTSU portion of the application. VTSU will require submission of a transcript, a resume and a few other items. You will receive further correspondence once the VMI application is completed, submitted and you have been notified of acceptance.

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 customary for the participant’s school district to 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.

Tuition for 2025-26 has been set at \$679 per credit; \$8148 per year. VMI is committed to keeping that rate constant while you are enrolled in the three-year program. There are no added fees assessed by VMI. VTSU may assess minor fees as commencement time rolls around.

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:

- 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

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

Bradley Beth, Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science, VT State University

Dr. Priscilla Bremser, Nathan Beman Professor Emerita of Mathematics, Middlebury College

Josh Bunker, Facilitator and Evaluation Team Co-lead, All Learner's Network

Kristen Kavanagh, Teacher and VMI Graduate, South Burlington

Elizabeth Kielty, Educational Consultant, All Learner's Network

Lilly DePino, Facilitator, All Learner's Network

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

Kathy Richardson, Mathematics Teacher and VMI Graduate, The Putney School

Tara Sharkey, Principal, Colchester Middle School

Ingrid Stallsmith, Mathematics Specialist, Hanover, NH and VMI graduate

Sandi Stanhope, Mathematics Specialist and VMI Graduate

Michaela Stone, Assistant Professor, Vermont State University

Dr. Julie M. Theoret, Professor of Mathematics, Vermont State University

Dr. Jim Wright, Assistant in Instruction-Mathematics, Bates College, ME

The VMI Board of Directors consists of the following individuals:

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



Vermont Mathematics Initiative Application Form Starting July 2025

Application overview

There are several ways to complete the application:

- complete the application on the next several pages, complete it and mail it via USPS to
VMI, Inc.
416 Washburn Rd
East Burke, VT 05832
- complete the application on the next several pages, complete it, transmit it electronically to judi@vmimathematics.com
- Complete the [online application](#).

A complete application includes:

- Part I: Applicant information and current resume
- Part II: Applicant's response to two essay questions
- Part III: Two letters of recommendation, including at least one from an administrator
- Part IV: Applicant signature

We encourage all interested applicants to submit the complete application by March 30, 2025. After March 30, 2025, we will accept applications based on availability in the cohort.

Only fully completed applications will be considered.



**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

The Goals of the VMI Master's Program

Through coursework, classroom applications, mentoring by VMI staff, and leadership training, teachers in the VMI:

- build a strong and deep knowledge and understanding of mathematics content;
- enhance classroom practice resulting in higher student performance
- conduct action research that informs instructional decisions at the classroom level and larger system
- provide leadership that supports school-wide improvement of mathematics teaching and learning

Please type or attach your responses to the following.

Suggested length: for each question, approximately one typed page (~500 words)

#1 Meeting the Needs of All Students - *Helping all children succeed in mathematics is a challenge faced by all educators.* Please describe your challenges in this endeavor and your goals for enhancing your effectiveness in this area. How do you think the goals of the VMI program will assist you in creating learning opportunities for all students?

#2 Intellectual Curiosity, Critical Reflection and Collaboration - *throughout your VMI enrollment, you will be asked to critically reflect upon your teaching practices, your growing content knowledge, your steps as a teacher leader and the overall ways in which your participation in the VMI program supports your professional goals.* Please comment on the value of collaboration and critical reflection and the ways in which you believe this will help you reach your professional goals. You might describe a situation you've encountered in which collaboration and/or reflection resulted in improved decisions around teaching and learning, and the role you played in that collaboration. You might also describe your openness to working collaboratively with others in the cohort, your mentor and VMI instructors and faculty.



Vermont Mathematics Initiative Application Form Part III: Recommendations

Recommendations:

Please include two letters of recommendation to support your participation in this program, including at least one from 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.

Administrator letters are encouraged to address:

- the ways in which the applicant's participation in this professional development program will support the improvement of student performance in mathematics at the school
- the ways in which the applicant's development as a teacher leader will support the school community goals
- the support the applicant can expect to receive from the school district throughout the three year VMI program

Part IV: Applicant Signature

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

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____