



STATE OF VERMONT
Department of Education
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Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

Virtual Courses will Connect Vermont K-12 Learning Community

MONTPELIER - Vermont teachers will be offering online courses and connecting to students throughout the state and the world as part of the Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative, an ARRA-funded initiative to bring a K-12 Virtual School to Vermont.

The Vermont Department of Education requested proposals for the \$400,000 Title IID grant program from entities within Vermont in the fall of 2009. The grant tasked an entity to lead, manage, and develop a system that provided online learning opportunities for all Vermont schools. "We are very pleased with this model and feel the cooperative model makes it very appealing for Vermont schools," says Peter Drescher, Education Technology Coordinator overseeing the Title IID program.

Vermont now joins 26 other states in the country by offering a virtual school option to its students.

"The initial phases of this program will require support from school administrators as we train teachers to teach online and ramp up course offerings," says the new Program Coordinator, Jeff Renard. "We want schools to become supporting members by offering courses from their schools which, in turn, will get them seats in other online courses being offered by other schools around the state."

Renard has been the Distance Learning Coordinator with the River Valley Technical Center in Springfield, Vermont for ten years and has offered distance learning courses throughout Vermont and New Hampshire.

Called the Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC), this initiative is being spearheaded by a partnership of several regions around the state, including the River Valley Technical Center and Springfield School District, Burlington School District and five others that will be selected through a sub-grant process that will be released later this month.

The other partners include the Marlboro College Graduate School, the Community College of Vermont, Florida Virtual School, Global Classroom and the Learning Network of Vermont. These initial partners bring a wide range of experience and expertise to this endeavor and will be seeking individuals for the VTVLC advisory committee in the coming weeks. Their job will be to help develop a system that will make it easy for schools to share seats in an online classroom and help Vermont's students access courses that may not be available in their regional schools.

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Professional development is a major facet of this effort, and teacher preparation will be a priority. The initial group of teachers will be participating in course work that consists of 15 graduate credits along with several other workshops, courses and train the trainer mentoring workshops.

Watch for more information that will be released to superintendents across the state regarding the RFPs for initial partnerships in the VTVLC. For all other inquiries, email Jeff Renard at jrenard@rvtc.org.

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