# Superintendent’s Memo #062-19


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: March 15, 2019

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Secretary of Education’s 2019 Essay Challenge for Virginia and United States Government Students

I am pleased to announce, the Virginia Secretary of Education in partnership with the Virginia Commission on Civic Education (the Commission) would like to invite Virginia’s public high school students currently enrolled in a Virginia and United States Government course to enter the Secretary of Education’s 2019 Essay Challenge.

All public high school seniors across the Commonwealth will have the opportunity to demonstrate an understanding and knowledge of and commitment to engaged citizenship as it relates to the freedoms expressed in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America: “*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances*.”

The deadline for electronic submission is 5 p.m. Friday, April 26, 2019. Winners will be announced on Friday, May 24, 2019. Secretary Qarni will present the awards at a ceremony and celebration on Monday, June 3, 2019. First Place — $500, Second Place — $250, and Third Place — $100.

All individuals who wish to enter the 2019 Essay Contest must submit a Contest Packet (Attachment A) electronically to Senator Marsden’s office by 5 p.m. Friday, April 26, 2019, to civicsessaycontest@senate.virginia.gov. If you have any questions about the Secretary of Education’s 2019 Essay Challenge for Virginia and United States Government Students, please contact Chad Starzer at (804) 698-7453 or by email at cstarzer@senate.virginia.gov.

JFL/CBB/pk

**Attachments:**

A. Secretary of Education’s 2019 Essay Challenge Entry form (Word)
B. Secretary of Education’s 2019 Essay Challenge prompt and score sheet (Word)