# Superintendent’s Memo #259-19

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**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA   
Department of Education**

DATE: October 25, 2019

TO: Division Superintendents

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

**SUBJECT: Virginia Council on Women 9th Annual STEM Essay and Scholarship Contest**

The Virginia Department of Education is pleased to announce the [Virginia Council on Women’s](https://www.commonwealth.virginia.gov/advisory-boards/council-on-women/) 9th Annual STEM Essay and Scholarship Contest. The STEM Essay Contest was launched in 2012 with 170 young women from across the Commonwealth submitting essays focused on the student’s vision for a future STEM education or career. Last year, the Council received more than 500 essay submissions, and with the generosity of sponsors, awarded $25,000 in scholarships to five Virginia students.

The Council will award five scholarships (one in each of five geographic regions) to qualifying high school seniors who will be pursuing a STEM education at an institution of higher education, trade or technical school, online, and/or through certified STEM-oriented courses. Essays will be judged by a panel of Council members and individuals who represent STEM fields. Please share this opportunity with principals, teachers, parents, and students in your school divisions.

This year’s winners will be notified on Friday, February 28, 2020. The scholarship awards will be presented at a reception at the Executive Mansion in Richmond, Virginia, in Spring 2020 and will be hosted by the Governor and First Lady.

To be eligible, one must be female or identify as female, reside in Virginia, be a senior in high school and hold at least a 3.0 GPA for the merit-based awards and a 2.5 GPA for the need-based awards. For contest eligibility requirements and guidelines, please visit the Virginia Council on Women [STEM Essay Contest](https://www.commonwealth.virginia.gov/advisory-boards/council-on-women/stem-essay-contest/) web page. Entries must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, January 10, 2020.