



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education**

**DATE:** February 23, 2018  
**TO:** Division Superintendents  
**FROM:** Steven M. Constantino, Ed.D., Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**SUBJECT:** **Nominations for the Aspiring Special Education Leaders Academy**

I am pleased to announce that the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is planning for the eleventh cohort of its Aspiring Special Education Leaders Academy. This special education leadership initiative, established in 2008 to assist school divisions and state-operated programs with succession planning, is designed to help prepare potential leaders for administrative positions in special education. Through a yearlong program (August 2018 - August 2019) that will include a three-day workshop in August 2018, followed by monthly, two-day seminars, observations, assignments, and field experiences, cohort members will have opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and experiences that will help them to excel in positions of special education leadership.

The VDOE is now accepting one application per school division, state-operated program, regional program and training/technical assistance center for Academy participation. Approximately 20 participants will be selected for Cohort 11. While all of the above-referenced entities are invited to nominate promising special education leaders, preference will be given to those who have not had participants in past cohorts. Candidates for the Academy may include administrators holding entry level positions, teachers, student services staff members, and related services staff members who have demonstrated leadership. All candidates must possess at least a master's degree or be near completion of such and be endorsed by their special education directors and division Superintendents or designees. The selection process is competitive, and a committee will review applications and select participants based on the following criteria:

- Strength of candidate's written statement as included in the application;
- Experiences in special education and accomplishments as reflected in a résumé;
- Strength of recommendation by the candidate's supervisor or program manager;
- Endorsement by special education director and division superintendent or designee;
- Balanced representation, including regional representation.

The VDOE will fund costs associated with lodging, breakfast and lunch each meeting day, speaker fees, and relevant materials. School divisions or other sending agencies will assume costs related to mileage reimbursement, dinner on the meeting days, and substitutes.

[An application to participate in this program is attached and may also be found at the following website \[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\\_ed/tech\\\_asst\\\_prof\\\_dev/index.shtml\]\(http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\_ed/tech\_asst\_prof\_dev/index.shtml\)](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/tech_asst_prof_dev/index.shtml) by selecting the Leadership Academy's link.

Please note that candidates must submit their applications to your office through your director of special education. This gives you the opportunity to add your endorsement and submit the application packet for your recommended nominee. Application packets must be submitted to Beverly Wynter, Executive Secretary, Office of the Assistant Superintendent, Division of Special Education and Student Services, and postmarked by April 20, 2018. Candidates and nominators will be notified of selection outcomes in May 2018.

Thank you for your support as we begin the tenth year of this initiative and continue efforts to assist you in identifying and preparing future special education leaders. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Wynter via email at [Beverly.Wynter@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Beverly.Wynter@doe.virginia.gov) or by telephone at (804) 786-8079.

SMC/JE/bw

**Attachments:**

- A. [Application](#) (Word)
- B. [Recommendation](#) (Word)

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