# Superintendent’s Memo #061-20

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**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA   
Department of Education**

DATE: March 6, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

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

## SUBJECT: Announcing the Mary Peake Award for Excellence in Education Equity

I am pleased to announce the launch of the Virginia Department of Education’s statewide award that will recognize individuals and organizations making significant contributions to advancing educational equity. Nominations for [The Mary Peake Award for Excellence in Education Equity](http://www.virginiaisforlearners.virginia.gov/mary-peake-award/) are now being accepted. Please consider nominating an educator, policy maker, education advocacy group, or stakeholder organization whose service and leadership is impacting equity outcomes in the state.

Named after one of Virginia’s first education equity pioneers, these awards recognize Mrs. Peake’s contribution to equity and her continued inspiration to the field. Peake is known for educating both enslaved and free Black people in the mid-1800s, a time when such an act was illegal. Her fortitude to educate her people, particularly during a time when it was forbidden, demonstrates an understanding of the value of education and a commitment to serving those intentionally marginalized. Mary Peake’s work is a true testament to the ongoing journey towards education equity in the Commonwealth.

**All nomination materials must be submitted online by May 1, 2020 by 5:00 PM EST.** Winners of the Mary Peake Award for Excellence in Education Equity will be honored at the 3rd annual Virginia is for ALL Learners: Education Equity Summer Institute on July 14-15, 2020 at the Greater Richmond Convention Center in Richmond, Virginia. For more information about the nomination process and selection criteria, visit the Virginia is for Learners [website](http://www.virginiaisforlearners.virginia.gov/mary-peake-award/). For direct access to the nomination form, click [here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/M627RHC).

Nominations will be accepted in the following categories:

* **Educator** (Teacher, Paraprofessional, Specialist, etc.)
* **Policy Maker** (General Assembly Member, School Board Member, Elected Official)
* **School Leader** (Principal, Vice-principal, Superintendent, Central Office Staff, etc.)
* **Organization/Stakeholder Group** (Subject Specific team, Grade Level Team, Professional Learning Community (PLC), Educational Support Organization, Out of School Time Programs, etc.)

Virginia is committed to ensuring that its public education system is positioned to achieve equitable academic outcomes for all students. Every day, all across the Commonwealth, countless individuals and organizations work tirelessly in various capacities to help achieve this goal. The Mary Peake Award for Excellence in Education Equity provides an opportunity to recognize educators, stakeholders, and organizations whose commitment and equity advocacy has improved outcomes for Virginia students.

If you have any further questions, or otherwise require assistance, please contact Jenné Nurse in the Office of Equity and Community Engagement at the Virginia Department of Education at [jenne.nurse@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:jenne.nurse@doe.virginia.gov).

JFL/LDW/jvn