# Superintendent’s Memo #202-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: August 7, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

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

## SUBJECT: 2020-2021 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Teacher Recruitment and Retention Incentives

The 2020 General Assembly appropriated funding to attract, recruit, and retain high-quality diverse individuals to teach science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) subjects in Virginia middle and high schools experiencing difficulty in recruiting qualified teachers. Interested school divisions must submit to the Department of Education a STEM Teacher Recruitment and Retention Initiatives (TRRI) Application on the Single Sign-on for Web Systems (SSWS) portal and include the number of Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Mathematics, Mathematics-Algebra I, Middle Education 6-8: Mathematics, Middle Education 6-8: Science, Physics, Engineering, or Technology Education vacancies by school. Priority for distribution of these incentives shall be to school divisions experiencing the most acute difficulties in recruiting qualified teachers, defined for this initiative as the overall free and reduced lunch rate of 40 percent on the 2019-2020 [Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility Report](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition/statistics/index.shtml).

School divisions approved for funding shall advertise the incentive for eligible vacancies and award such funds to eligible teachers after teachers have met all requirements. For a teacher to be eligible, he or she must be employed full time in a hard-to-staff Virginia school. Hard-to-staff shall be defined for this initiative as any school having 40 percent or more students eligible for free and reduced lunch as reported on the 2019-2020 [Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility Report](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition/statistics/index.shtml). To be eligible, a teacher also must have an active five or ten-year renewable Virginia teaching license with one or more of the following endorsements and assigned to a teaching position in a corresponding STEM subject area:

* Biology;
* Chemistry;
* Earth Science;
* Mathematics;
* Mathematics-Algebra I;
* Middle Education 6-8: Mathematics;
* Middle Education 6-8: Science;
* Physics;
* Engineering; or
* Technology Education.

An eligible teacher will receive a $5,000 incentive award after the completion of the first, second, and third years of teaching STEM at a hard-to-staff school with a satisfactory performance evaluation and a signed contract in the same school division for the following school year. **The maximum incentive award for each eligible teacher is $15,000**. The incentive awards are taxable to the recipient, and the school division is responsible for ensuring all taxes are remitted. The **STEM Teacher Recruitment and Retention Incentives** anticipated vacancy data for school year 2020-2021 must besubmitted by **Wednesday, September 9, 2020**, on the SSWS portal. Each school division has an SSWS account manager who can provide your staff member, designated to serve as your STEM Teacher Recruitment and Retention Incentives contact, access to the TRRI application. Instructions for entering and submitting the anticipated vacancies are available online as part of the TRRI STEM Grant Application. **Divisions no longer are to submit hard copies of the application to the Virginia Department of Education.**

Please note, for the purpose of the award of the additional $1,000 to individuals who received funds under this program prior to July 1, 2018, the criteria provided in Chapter 1 of the 2018 Acts of Assembly, Special Session 1, will continue to apply through fiscal year 2021. In addition, for individuals who received funds under this program prior to July 1, 2020, the criteria provided in Chapter 836 of the 2019 Acts of Assembly, will continue to apply. All incentive awards are contingent upon available funding.

Questions regarding the STEM Teacher Recruitment and Retention Incentives may be directed to Maggie M. Clemmons, Director of Licensure and School Leadership, at (804) 371-2471 or Maggie.Clemmons@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/mmc