# Superintendent’s Memo #213-20

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**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA   
Department of Education**

DATE: August 14, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

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

## SUBJECT: Culturally Relevant and Inclusive Education Practices Advisory Committee

During the 2020 legislative session, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation ([HB916](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+bil+HB0916&201+bil+HB0916)) that requires the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to establish and appoint, in consultation with the Governor’s Office, members to a Culturally Relevant and Inclusive Education Practices Advisory Committee.  The charge of this Advisory Committee is to provide (i) standards recommendations to the Department of Education that shall be considered by the Board of Education during the 2021-2022 review of the *History and Social Science Standards of Learning*; and (ii)recommendations for the issuance of Board of Education guidelines for local school division staff, including teachers and school counselors, to offer age-appropriate anti-bias education to students; and (iii) recommendations on meaningful professional development with school personnel related to culturally relevant and inclusive education practices.

I am pleased to announce the Virginia Department of Education is seeking recommendations through an application process for the Culturally Relevant and Inclusive Education Practices Advisory Committee established by HB916.  Committee members will be selected on the basis of expertise, experience, and balanced regional representation. While many individuals may apply, due to space constraints, not all will be selected to serve on the Committee. Selected applicants should have:

* knowledge of the 2015 *Standards of Learning* for history and social science; and/or
* experience with developing or providing educators professional development that focuses on culturally relevant and inclusive education; and/or
* experience with developing or administering anti-bias training in educational environments;
* an understanding that the activities of the Committee are subject to public and press scrutiny;
* the ability to work within a community that values professionalism, the contributions of every member, and differing points of view; and
* the ability to participate in virtual meetings of the Committee from the fall of 2020 through summer 2021.

The Committee will work towards developing recommendations for educators to create an environment that fosters an inclusive mindset where there is involvement and empowerment, and the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized. An inclusive environment promotes and sustains a sense of belonging; it values and practices respect for the talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of living of its members.  The Committee’s work will also focus on developing recommendations for **Culturally Relevant** content and practices.  Based upon the work of Gloria Ladson-Billings, *culturally relevant pedagogy and practices recognize the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning. Culturally relevant practices:*

1. expect and yield academic success;
2. help students develop positive ethnic and cultural identities while simultaneously helping them achieve academically; and
3. support students’ abilities to recognize, understand, and critique current and past social inequalities.

Applicants may apply [online](https://forms.gle/j19QN9778qsbpdTd8). All applications submitted on or before Friday, September 4, 2020, will be considered for selection by VDOE in collaboration with the Governor’s Office. For more information regarding the Culturally Relevant and Inclusive Education Practices Advisory Committee, please contact the Department of Policy, Equity & Communications, at   
(804) 225-2092 or the Department of Learning and Innovation at (804) 225-2034.

JFL/CBB/pk