# Superintendent’s Memo #277-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: October 16, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

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

## SUBJECT: 2021 United States Senate Youth Program (Scholarship Opportunities for High School Juniors and Seniors)

The Virginia Department of Education will select two student delegates to represent Virginia in the United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) sponsored by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation. Each delegate will receive a $10,000 scholarship.  Delegates will attend the 59th annual United States senate youth program Washington week **online**, March 14 - 18, 2021.

Each public and private high school may submit up to three applications. The application and selection process for the 2021 USSYP delegate has been modified due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Application and Selection Process for the 2021 USSYP delegate:

* Applications will include an essay component and should be submitted via email to vdoe.hss@doe.virginia.gov.  All applications will be reviewed and ten finalists will be chosen to complete an online portion of the Public Affairs examination.
* The exam is designed to test knowledge of the United States Constitution, American History, and knowledge of public affairs and current events.  In addition to the online exam, the ten finalists will participate in a virtual interview with a panel of judges appointed by the Virginia Department of Education.
* The panel will consider the examination results, outstanding academic ability, and demonstrated qualities of leadership and community service when making the final selection to represent the Commonwealth of Virginia.
* Selected delegates must hold a leadership position in any one of the following student government, civic, or educational organizations during the entire 2020-2021 academic year.

**Due to COVID-19, students who are unable to serve in qualifying leadership positions for the 2020-2021 academic year may use positions held in the previous year, as verified by the state selection administrator:**

* Student Body president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer
* Class president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer
* Student Council representative
* A National Honor Society officer (including discipline-based honor societies such as the National English and Social Studies Honor Societies that include service components)
* Student representative elected or appointed (appointed by a panel, commission, or board) to a local, district, regional, or state-level civic service and/or educational organization approved by the state selection administrator

**Participation or holding an officer position in academic clubs and/or educational competition programs/conferences do not qualify a student for USSYP, although many students who qualify participate in these activities.**

Each nominee must be a permanent resident of the United States and currently enrolled in a public or private secondary school located in the state in which either one of his or her parents or guardians legally resides. Students from Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) overseas will represent the state(s) in which the parents/guardians are U.S. legal voting residents. Students attending DoDEA schools in the U.S. or students enrolled through U.S. military bases in local schools will represent the state in which their school is located. A student attending a school that is located in a state other than the state of legal residence of either of the student’s parents or guardians is not eligible.

Detailed information about the United States Senate Youth Program may be found at [United States Senate Youth.](http://www.ussenateyouth.org/)  An application and required essay questions are attached and must be emailed to the Virginia Department of Education History and Social Science program at vdoe.hss@doe.virginia.gov, by Friday, December 11, 2020.

The designated point of contact will email a signed and scanned copy of the complete application including the essay responses to vdoe.hss@doe.virginia.gov.

Notification of selected finalists and their designated school contact will take place on or before January 6, 2021. For further information, please contact Ms. Christonya Brown, Coordinator of History and Social Science, by email at Christonya.Brown@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2893.

JFL/CB/pk

### AttachmentA. [Student Application 2021 United States Senate Youth Program (Word)](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/277-20a.docx)B.  [Student Essay Response 2021 United States Senate Youth Program (Word)](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/277-20b.docx)