



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
**Department of Education**

**DATE:** November 30, 2018  
**TO:** Division Superintendents  
**FROM:** James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**SUBJECT:** **Early Childhood Education Leaders Communities of Learning for Inclusive Programs**

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) will offer the *Early Childhood Education Leaders Communities of Learning for Inclusive Programs*. The purpose of the Communities of Learning (CoL) is to deliver targeted technical assistance and professional development to leaders in early childhood and will focus on building and maintaining high-quality early childhood inclusive programs. The online CoL will lead participants through *The Preschool Inclusion Toolbox: How to Build and Lead a High-Quality Program*. This comprehensive resource provides a structured process for addressing systems-level change and improving inclusive practices. Specifically, participants will:

- Describe factors that lead to high-quality inclusive preschool programs;
- Discuss key challenges to implementing inclusive programs;
- Describe successful division and program strategies, including service delivery models and funding mechanisms;
- Engage in peer-to-peer discussions about high-quality inclusive programs;
- Develop and implement an action plan for preschool inclusion to address needed changes in policies, service delivery, and staff training; and
- Identify evidence-based strategies for implementing high-quality inclusive preschool programs.

An online CoL session will be held in the afternoon during the months of February, March, April, May, and October 2019. A multi-day live professional development event will be held during the summer 2019 with registration and lodging provided by VDOE. The team is to attend all sessions and the live event and is to meet at least one time between sessions. Participants will be provided copies of *The Preschool Inclusion Toolbox: How to Build and Lead a High-Quality Program*, webinars, and other resources and materials needed for implementation.

Participating school divisions and community agencies are to form a preschool planning team to participate in the CoL and implement activities to improve inclusive opportunities for preschoolers. There is to be a minimum of three members. Members can be early childhood

administrators, early childhood special education administrators, related service personnel, teachers, family members, and any others deemed appropriate. Recommendations for team members include:

- an administrator who can commit to the process of expanding and sustaining inclusive opportunities,
- a school division leader who acts as the program administrator for Early Childhood Special Education programs,
- a school division or local agency leader who acts as the program coordinator for the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) program,
- a program leader who acts as the Disabilities Specialist for the Head Start program, and
- members of the school division's VPI+ leadership team to include the VPI+ coordinator, coach, and family engagement coordinator.

The application may be found in the [Early Childhood Education Leaders Communities of Learning for Inclusive Programs Application, Attachment A](#) of this memorandum. A school division interested in submitting an application must identify a representative to complete the application and communicate directly with team members. The application is due by 4 p.m. on January 9, 2019. The VDOE will make notifications to accepted school division applicants no later than January 18, 2019.

Questions should be emailed to [Dawn Hendricks](#), Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator, or she may be reached by phone at (804) 225-2675.

JFL/DH

Attachment

- A. Early Childhood Education Leaders Communities of Learning for Inclusive Programs Application (Word)