



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: December 21, 2018
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: Update on Virginia Department of Education Study of Special Education Regional Programs

In 2015, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) conducted a comprehensive study of Special Education Regional Programs and the funding model used to provide funds to school divisions that provided special education services to students through those programs. After the study was completed, VDOE initiated a project to begin a transition from the existing funding model for these programs to a new funding model that will be implemented to provide for a more equitable distribution of these funds to all 132 school divisions in Virginia.

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update to all divisions on the status of this project/transition and what divisions can expect in the next several years, as VDOE implements this Equity Model of Funding for Students with Intensive Support Needs.

This Equity Model will include several aspects that differ from the current funding model, as follows:

- The VDOE will distribute funds for Students with Intensive Support Needs, rather than for students in the current “reimbursable disability categories” in “regional programs.”
- The VDOE will use a formula to distribute funds. One possible formula would apportion funds based on five percent of a division’s population of students with disabilities.

NOTE: Until a new funding methodology is approved, VDOE will continue using the current funding model to apportion funds to previous and new recipients.

- Regional Programs will no longer submit a Rate Package. Rather, individual divisions will submit an Application for Funds for Students with Intensive Support Needs. The VDOE will provide specific direction in the coming months concerning the time frame for this change.

For the 2017-2018 school year, VDOE identified two new Regional Programs representing 18 participating divisions, all of which received funds for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. For the 2018-2019 school year, VDOE has entered into discussions with over 30 school divisions that will be potential new individual recipients of funds. It is expected that these divisions will receive funds for the 2018-2019 school year. The VDOE will begin discussions with the remaining divisions during the 2019-2020 school year, with the expectation that all 132 school divisions will be receiving funds by the end of fiscal year 2020.

All divisions that have previously received funds under the current funding model will receive specific information from VDOE regarding changes to their level of funding under the new system. The VDOE recognizes the potential impact of revised levels of funding and any changes will be made over the course of several years and will be made through individual discussions with divisions.

The VDOE staff members will continue to provide additional detail through communication with divisions during the 2018-2019 school year and beyond. The VDOE will provide copies of the presentations that have been made over the last three years. These will provide the background and basis for the original study and for the project/transition.

Your continued cooperation in this important initiative is greatly appreciated. Ultimately, a more equitable distribution of funds for Students with Intensive Support Needs is part of VDOE's efforts to improve services to and outcomes for Virginia's children with disabilities. Please contact Mr. Paul Raskopf, Regional Program Tuition Reimbursement Assistance Specialist, at (804) 225-2038 or at Paul.Raskopf@doe.virginia.gov, if you have questions or would like any additional information.

JFL/pr