



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

April 8, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: The Teachers on the Estuary (TOTE): Estuary Science for Elementary and Middle School Teachers

The Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) Office of Science and Health Education and the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (CBNERR) are pleased to announce the Teacher on the Estuary (TOTE): Estuary Science for Elementary and Middle School Teachers. This standards-based professional development workshop focuses on fourth- and sixth-grade environmental concepts related to Chesapeake Bay and its estuaries. The TOTE workshop supports Governor McAuliffe's commitment of engaging students in meaningful outdoor education by supporting teacher and administrator professional learning.

The Teacher on the Estuary (TOTE) workshop consists of two components:

1. Pre- and post-Web meetings (1 hour each) – Prior to the TOTE workshop, teachers will receive information about the workshop and assignments to include a pre-assessment (June, 2016). A follow-up webinar will be conducted in the fall as a forum for teachers to share ideas and implementation of the workshop materials.
2. Three-day TOTE workshop will be held from August 2-4, 2016, at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in Gloucester, Virginia. The tentative schedule for the workshop is outlined below.
 - a. Day 1: Teachers will receive an introduction to the Chesapeake Bay, Environmental Literacy, and a Meaningful Watershed Education Experience (MWEE) with correlations to the Virginia Standards of Learning. Supplementary resources will be shared, grade-level appropriate activities will be conducted, and teachers will have a field experience at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) Teaching Marsh.
 - b. Day 2: The focus will be on the weather and water quality of the local environment. Teachers will visit a reserve site with observing systems such as buoys, water quality data sondes, and weather stations. Activities that correlate to weather and water quality will be conducted. The day will conclude with a field experience to Goodwin Islands, Taskinas Creek, or Gloucester Point Beach.
 - c. Day 3: The emphasis will be on threats to the Chesapeake Bay, including climate change. Data will be reviewed concerning the effect of climate change in coastal Virginia. Grade appropriate activities will be conducted and teacher and administrator teams will work on implementation plans with the goal of implementing Environmental Education activities and MWEEs in their schools.

The VDOE will assume the cost of registration, lodging, and meals for all participants. School divisions are encouraged to cover mileage expenses for the sessions for division participants as this cost is not assumed by the VDOE; however, this is not a requirement of the program.

Enrollment for TOTE is limited to 30 teachers and administrators from across the state. Schools will be encouraged to send teams of teachers and administrators. A team from a school or division will be given

preference over individual teacher applications. Priority will be given to those teams from schools not meeting the state benchmark for accreditation in science. An attempt will be made to provide representation from each Superintendents' region. Final selection of participants for all the Institutes will also be based on the order in which applications are received.

Registration for teachers can be completed online at [Teacher on the Estuary Registration](#). Registration for TOTE workshop will be closed on May 2, 2016. Notifications of acceptance will be provided to applicants and the applicants' school principals by e-mail on or before May 27, 2016.

Questions regarding the TOTE workshop should be directed to Anne Petersen, science specialist, by e-mail at anne.petersen@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2676.

SRS/AP/rt

Links:

- [Teacher on the Estuary Registration](#)