



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

December 5, 2014

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: 2015-2016 Application for the Virginia Middle School Teacher Corps

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is pleased to announce the Virginia Middle School Teacher Corps (MSTC) application for the 2015-2016 school year. The MSTC program continues to focus on reinforcing the quality of mathematics instruction by providing **recruitment and/or retention** incentives for effective mathematics teachers in middle grades schools where mathematics is an area identified for improvement.

A school division can access and use MSTC funds to **recruit** and/or **retain** effective mathematics teachers for eligible middle grades schools through the streamlined MSTC application, which is due to VDOE by 4 p.m., Monday, March 2, 2015.

A list of middle grades schools eligible to participate in the MSTC program in 2015-2016 is found in [Attachment B](#) to this memorandum. These are schools that are 1) "Warned in Mathematics" under the state's school accreditation process and/or are 2) identified as Priority Schools, where mathematics is an area identified for improvement.

School divisions with eligible middle grades schools will use the MSTC program to help: 1) fill mathematics teacher vacancies with qualified mathematics teachers; or 2) retain effective teachers in their current, eligible schools. School divisions may apply for funding to provide annual salary differentials of \$5,000 for each of three years for qualified teachers. Teachers receiving the MSTC incentives should be in teaching positions that reach students at risk of failure in mathematics. Qualified MSTC teachers must:

1. hold an active, five-year Virginia teaching license;
2. hold an appropriate teaching endorsement to teach middle school mathematics;
3. have at least three years experience in full-time teaching of middle or high school mathematics;
4. have a major or minor in mathematics (a minimum of 18 semester hours of mathematics coursework);
and
5. have demonstrated success in improving students' academic achievement in mathematics.

Please note that years two and three for the three-year school and teacher eligibility are contingent upon: 1) continued funding each year from the Virginia General Assembly; and 2) continued annual performance evaluation of proficient or above by the MSTC teacher.

The VDOE will notify all school divisions of their MSTC applications' status (nonapproval or approval and the number of MSTC positions) by **March 31, 2015**. This notice of intent will **precede** final approval of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 state budget. Around mid-May 2015, **pending final approval of the FY 2016 state budget**,

final confirmation will be made with school divisions of the awarded MSTC positions. At that point, those school divisions with MSTC awards will be able to begin using the MSTC salary differential as an incentive to **recruit** new or **retain** existing qualified mathematics teachers for the 2015-2016 school year in eligible schools. The VDOE will make official, hardcopy **Notices of Grant Award** to approved school divisions on or around **July 1, 2015**.

School divisions **may** include the MSTC teacher salary differential as creditable compensation for improved teacher retirement benefits under the Virginia Retirement System. The salary differential incentive payment is taxable to the recipient, and the school division assumes responsibility for ensuring that all taxes and/or Virginia Retirement System match are remitted. School divisions **may** also require additional duties of MSTC teachers to assist eligible schools' mathematics programs. Additional information about the MSTC program and how to apply may be found in the [MSTC Program Application, Attachment A](#) to this memorandum.

If you need additional information or have questions about the MSTC program, please contact Mrs. Kim Powell, grants manager, Office of Science and Health Education, by e-mail at Kim.Powell@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-3609; or Mr. Jim Firebaugh, science and mathematics specialist, by e-mail at Jim.Firebaugh@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-3688.

SRS/EMR/rt

Attachments:

- A. [Virginia Middle School Teacher Corps Program Application, 2015-2016](#) (Word)
- B. [Virginia Middle School Teacher Corps Eligible Schools 2015-2016](#) (PDF)