



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education

October 11, 2013

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: IWitness Video Challenge Announcement**

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of a video essay contest focusing on student community involvement for secondary students. Commemorating the 20th anniversary of Steven Spielberg's Oscar-winning film *Schindler's List*, the contest is guided by the theme *Ordinary People – Extraordinary Actions*. The challenge, sponsored by the University of Southern California's Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education, asks students to develop a video essay that links their own voices to those in IWitness to demonstrate how any individual can take action to make the world a better place.

Middle and high school students complete the [IWitness Video Challenge](#) activity on the IWitness Web site. The activity challenges them to increase their understanding of digital and media literacy, deepen their critical thinking, and promote positive social change in their community and in the world. As part of the activity, students identify ways in which they can make a difference in their community and create a video essay regarding what they have done. Teachers and their students select a winning video from each class to submit by December 2, 2013.

Video editing software is provided on the IWitness Web site, but students will need to gather images of their activities. The following two Web links provide further information:

<http://IWitness.usc.edu/SFI/IWitnessChallenge/Guidelines.aspx>  
<http://IWitness.usc.edu/SFI/IWitnessChallenge/GettingStarted.aspx>

One national winner will receive an all-expense-paid trip with one parent or guardian and his/her teacher to screen their video as part of the USC Shoah Foundation's 20th anniversary activities in Los Angeles, as well as attend the 2014 Annual USC Shoah Foundation Gala as invited guests. If the winning entry is from a team video project, one student representative will need to be selected by the teacher to represent the team in Los Angeles.

If you have questions, please contact Jean Weller, instructional technology specialist, by telephone at (804) 225-2825 or via e-mail at [jean.weller@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:jean.weller@doe.virginia.gov).

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