



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

November 22, 2013

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Virginia Initiative for Science Teaching and Achievement - Applications Open for 2014-2015 School Year

Applications are now being accepted for the Virginia Initiative for Science Teaching and Achievement (VISTA) professional development programs for the 2014-2015 school year. The VISTA program is a statewide partnership of approximately 80 school divisions, six Virginia universities, and the Virginia Department of Education, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Its goal is to translate research-based best teaching practices into improved science teaching and student learning for students at all levels. VISTA offers the following professional development programs:

- [Elementary Science Institute](#) for teams of 4th-6th grade classroom teachers;
- [Secondary Teacher Program](#) for new middle and high school science teachers;
- [New Science Coordinator Academy](#) for coordinators with five or fewer years of experience; and
- [Science Education Faculty Academy](#) for those who teach elementary or secondary science methods courses at Virginia's colleges.

Participants in the elementary and secondary teacher professional development programs receive professional learning opportunities, personalized coaching, and mentoring at no cost to the teacher or the school division. Teachers also receive stipends plus resources and materials for the classroom.

You can watch this short [video](#) for an overview of what VISTA teaches. Instructional principles include hands-on science, problem-based learning, student-centered inquiry, and the nature of science.

An online application and additional information about the VISTA programs can be found at <http://vista.gmu.edu>. For more information, please contact Molli Logerwell by e-mail at vista@gmu.edu or by telephone at (703) 993-5628.

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