



#131-21

**Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #131-21**

DATE: May 14, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Virginia Public School Authority Educational Technology Notes and School Security Equipment Grants**

The Virginia Public School Authority (VPSA) has conducted the sale of technology equipment notes, Series XXI. The proceeds from these notes provide the next installment of funds in the educational technology grant program, which provides support for school divisions to develop and implement the Standards of Learning (SOL) Web-based Technology Initiative. The Series XXI notes also include the Virginia e-Learning Backpack Initiative as well as funding for Series IX of the school security equipment grant program. Both of these programs will be discussed below in this memorandum.

The goal of the educational technology grant program is to improve the instructional, remedial, and testing capabilities of the SOL in local school divisions and to increase the number of schools achieving full accreditation. Proceeds of the Series XXI notes are provided to:

1. Establish a computer-based instructional and testing system for the SOL;
2. Develop an Internet ready local area network (LAN) capability and high speed Internet connectivity at high schools, followed by middle schools, and then in elementary schools; and

3. Establish a 5-to-1 student computer ratio for high schools, followed by middle schools, and then in elementary schools.

School divisions are required to use the Series XXI funds first to develop and maintain the capability to support the administration of online SOL testing for all students with the exception of students with a documented need for a paper SOL test.

In addition, for purposes of establishing or enhancing a computer-based instructional program supporting the SOL testing system, school divisions may use these grant funds to purchase handheld multifunctional computing devices that support a broad range of applications and that are controlled by operating systems providing full multimedia support and mobile Internet connectivity. School divisions that elect to use these grant funds to purchase such qualifying handheld devices must continue to meet the online testing requirements outlined above.

Attachment A lists the estimated local grant allocations for the Series XXI VPSA note issue. Grants to school divisions for the Series XXI notes are based on \$26,000 per eligible school and \$50,000 per school division. Eligible schools include those reporting fall membership as of September 30, 2020, as well as regional vocational, special education, and alternative education programs, academic year Governor's Schools, Code RVA Regional High School, and the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind. Schools that serve only pre-kindergarten students are not eligible for this grant.

Eligibility for Virginia e-Learning Backpack Initiative Grants in Series XXI

The VPSA Series XXI sale provides grants for schools that include a ninth grade that are not fully accredited for the second consecutive year based on school accreditation ratings in effect for fiscal year (FY) 2020 and FY 2021. Those qualifying schools receive: (1) a supplemental grant of \$400 per student reported in ninth grade fall membership in a qualifying school for the purchase of a **laptop or tablet computer device** for that student and (2) a supplemental grant of \$2,400 per qualifying school to purchase two content creation packages for teachers. Schools eligible to receive this supplemental grant in fiscal year 2021 shall continue to receive the grant for the number of subsequent years equaling the number of grades 9 through 12 in the qualifying school up to a maximum of four years. Eligible schools may only receive this grant for one, four-year period. Participating school divisions will

assume recurring costs for electronic textbook purchases and maintenance. Additional information on the schools that qualify for these additional funds is included in **Attachment A**.

Local Match Requirements

Localities are required to provide a match of funds equal to 20 percent of the total grant amount provided to the school division, including the e-Learning Backpack Initiative grants. At least 25 percent of the local match must be used for teacher training in the use of technology funded with the educational technology grants. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is authorized to reduce the required local match for school divisions with a composite index below 0.2000. The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind is not required to provide a 20 percent match to its grant amount.

School divisions that administer 100 percent of SOL tests online in all elementary, middle, and high schools may use up to 75 percent of their required local match to purchase targeted technology-based interventions. Such interventions may include the necessary technology and software to support online learning, technology-based content systems, content management systems, technology equipment systems, information/data management systems, and other appropriate technologies that support the individual needs of students. School divisions that receive the e-Learning Backpack Initiative grants must use the 20 percent required local match of funds in qualifying schools to purchase laptop or tablet computer devices for ninth-grade students reported in fall membership and content creation packages for teachers.

Reimbursement Process

The VPSA sold the spring 2021 Educational Technology Notes, Series XXI, on April 27, 2021, and closed the notes transaction on May 13, 2021. Proceeds of the Series XXI notes are now available for reimbursement to divisions (and to regional programs with accounts established separately from the fiscal agent school division) for qualifying expenditures from the division's (or regional program's) reimbursement account established under the Virginia State Non-Arbitrage Program (SNAP).

There are a limited number of business days between the closing date and the end of FY 2021 on June 30, 2021. To ensure sufficient time to process the school division reimbursement

requests that need to be received by June 30, 2021, such reimbursement requests must be received by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) electronically within the Virginia Public School Authority Reimbursement Process (VPSARP) application on the Single Sign-on for Web Systems (SSWS) portal, by **June 29, 2021**.

Consistent with previous VPSA notes, payments to school divisions and regional programs will be made on a reimbursement basis only. School divisions and regional programs must first complete payments for the qualifying equipment purchased and then file a Series XXI reimbursement request with VDOE. School divisions and regional programs that adopted a reimbursement resolution and made expenditures prior to the issuance of the Series XXI notes are required to certify that all reimbursements are qualifying reimbursements. School divisions and regional programs may not be reimbursed for qualifying expenditures incurred more than 60 days prior to the adoption of a reimbursement resolution. Please note that reimbursements for the Series XXI issue for regional vocational, regional special education, Governor's Schools, regional alternative education programs, and the Code RVA Regional High School may be made directly to the regional programs through separate SNAP reimbursement accounts set up specifically for regional programs. If separate accounts for regional programs are established, school divisions will not be required to deposit the regional programs' share of the note proceeds in their account and then pass those proceeds on to the regional program.

Series XXI reimbursement requests will be submitted through the VPSARP application via the Virginia Department of Education's [Single Sign-on for Web Systems \(SSWS\) portal](#). Additional information about the VPSARP application can be found in [Superintendent's Memorandum #288-18](#).

The VPSARP application includes certification provisions that incorporate federal and state requirements regarding capital expenditures that qualify for reimbursement. School divisions are primarily responsible for determining whether requests for reimbursement are permissible under federal and state requirements. School division officials should carefully read and initial the certification provisions to ensure that each reimbursement request meets all of the stated provisions.

Divisions are not required to submit copies of supporting reimbursement documentation to VDOE because the reimbursement request form incorporates the certification provisions.

Copies of all supporting documents (invoices, work orders, statements, etc.) for which reimbursement is to be made must be retained by the school division for at least five years in the event an audit is required. All reimbursement requests for the VPSA Series XXI notes issue must be made using the above-referenced VPSARP application. VDOE will review the reimbursement request and, when approved, file the request on behalf of the school division (or regional program) with the Virginia SNAP, which serves as the investment and account manager for the note proceeds. Please note that no reimbursement requests for the Series XXI notes will be approved until all of the division's grant allocations from Series XVII (spring 2017), Series XVIII (spring 2018), Series XIX (spring 2019), and Series XX (spring 2020) are fully drawn down.

Prior to SNAP executing the actual payment of proceeds to school divisions or regional programs, school divisions and regional programs must have completed the SNAP [VPSA Technology Notes Withdrawal Instructions form](#) to provide their bank routing number and account number directly to SNAP. **If you need to make changes to wire instructions previously submitted to SNAP, please complete and sign the form and return it to SNAP prior to requesting any further reimbursements.** The completed form should be faxed to SNAP representatives at 1-800-252-9551. If you have not completed this form, VDOE will hold all requests for reimbursements until SNAP confirms receipt of your certified bank account information. SNAP will maintain all bank information and, if needed, will assist divisions who need to amend such information. If you have any questions regarding the SNAP VPSA Technology Notes Withdrawal Instructions form, please contact SNAP at 1-800-570-SNAP.

Proceeds from the Series XVII, XVIII, XIX, XX, and XXI issues may not be used for elementary schools until all middle schools in your division have achieved Stage 2 Middle School Readiness Certification. All high schools have achieved full readiness certification. See [Administrative Superintendent's Memo No. 27](#), dated May 17, 2002, for additional information on certification procedures. Procedures for achieving all levels of school readiness certification are explained in the following document:

- [School Readiness Certification Procedures](#)

The School Readiness Certification workbook is a downloadable Excel template. This file is available on VDOE's website at:

- [School Readiness Certification Workbook](#)

If expenditures for elementary schools are submitted prior to achieving the appropriate certifications for middle schools, expenditures for elementary schools cannot be reimbursed until after all readiness certifications for middle schools have been achieved.

Email requests for technical assistance about the Series XXI reimbursement process to VPSA@doe.virginia.gov.

School Security Equipment Grant Program

In addition to the grants provided to support the SOL Web-based Technology Initiative and Virginia e-Learning Backpack Initiative grants, \$12.0 million is provided for Series IX of the school security equipment grants (included as part of Series XXI notes issuance). Proceeds of these additional equipment notes will be used to help offset the related local costs associated with the purchase of appropriate security equipment that will improve and help ensure the safety of students attending public schools in Virginia.

School divisions are required to use these funds to purchase security equipment that will be installed in eligible schools. Grant funds will be provided on a reimbursement basis through an online application contained in the SSWS portal. The grants cannot be used to pay for security equipment that is not included or described in the grant application or for other types of school construction work (e.g., building renovations or alterations) or to cover any professional costs (e.g., architectural and engineering fees). The addition of any other architectural brick and mortar projects will result in the disqualification of a school division's grant application. The only exception is building modifications and fixtures such as Security Vestibules, as permitted by House Bill 2720, which was enacted at the 2019 General Assembly session. Eligible schools must be scheduled to remain open for at least five more years and must not have any planned renovations/additions scheduled for the next five years that would cause the security equipment being requested to become obsolete.

These Series IX school security equipment grants will be awarded on a competitive basis through division applications submitted to VDOE via SSWS by August 1, 2021. Divisions may be awarded up to \$250,000 in grant funding for use in eligible schools and regional programs.

Localities are required to provide a match for these funds equal to 25 percent of the grant amount. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is authorized to reduce the required local match for school divisions with a composite index of local ability-to-pay below 0.2000. The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind is exempt from the local match requirement.

Guidelines for the program and the Series IX application form to apply for funding are available on the VDOE website at:

- [Security Equipment Grant Program Guidelines](#)

Educational Technology Notes, Series XX (Spring 2020)

As initially announced in [Superintendent's Memo #136-20](#), dated June 12, 2020, the Series XX notes were sold by the VPSA in May 2020. Proceeds of the Series XX notes were available to school divisions for reimbursement of qualifying expenditures on and after the closing date of June 9, 2020. For grant allocations of Series XX VPSA notes, see **Attachment A** to Superintendent's Memo #136-20. No reimbursement requests for the Series XX notes will be approved until the division's Educational Technology Notes Series XIX proceeds are fully spent. **Attachment E provides the status of the Series XX grant balances.**

For divisions and regional programs that have not completed reimbursement of expenditures from the Series XX VPSA notes, the procedures outlined in Superintendent's Memo #136-20, should be followed.

Educational Technology Notes, Series XIX (Spring 2019)

As initially announced in [Superintendent's Memo #121-19](#), dated May 24, 2019, the Series XIX notes were sold by the VPSA in May 2019. Proceeds of the Series XIX notes were available to school divisions for reimbursement of qualifying expenditures on and after the closing date of May 23, 2019. For grant allocations of Series XIX VPSA notes, see **Attachment A** to Superintendent's Memo #121-19. No reimbursement requests for the Series XIX notes will be approved until the division's Educational Technology Notes Series XVIII proceeds are fully spent. **Attachment D provides the status of the Series XIX grant balances.**

For divisions and regional programs that have not completed reimbursement of expenditures from the Series XIX VPSA notes, the procedures outlined in Superintendent's Memo #121-19, should be followed.

Educational Technology Notes, Series XVIII (Spring 2018)

As initially announced in [Superintendent's Memo #137-18](#), dated May 25, 2018, the Series XVIII notes were sold by the VPSA in May 2018. Proceeds of the Series XVIII notes were available to school divisions for reimbursement of qualifying expenditures on and after the closing date of May 22, 2018. For grant allocations of Series XVIII VPSA notes, see **Attachment A** to Superintendent's Memo #137-18. No reimbursement requests for the Series XVIII notes will be approved until the division's Educational Technology Notes Series XVII proceeds are fully spent. **Attachment C provides the status of the Series XVIII grant balances.** For divisions and regional programs that have not completed reimbursement of expenditures from the Series XVIII VPSA notes, the procedures outlined in Superintendent's Memo #137-18, should be followed.

Educational Technology Notes, Series XVII (Spring 2017)

As initially announced in [Superintendent's Memo #161-17](#), dated May 26, 2017, the Series XVII notes were sold by the VPSA in May 2017. Proceeds of the Series XVII notes were available to school divisions for reimbursement of qualifying expenditures on and after the closing date of May 23, 2017. For grant allocations of Series XVII VPSA notes, see **Attachment A** to Superintendent's Memo #161-17. No reimbursement requests for the Series XVII notes will be approved until the division's Educational Technology Notes Series XVI proceeds are fully spent. **Attachment B provides the status of the Series XVII grant balances.** For divisions and regional programs that have not completed reimbursement of expenditures from the Series XVII VPSA notes, the procedures outlined in Superintendent's Memo #161-17, should be followed.

Educational Technology Notes, Series XXII (Spring 2022)

Chapter 552, 2021 Special Session I General Assembly, includes funding to continue the educational technology notes program in FY 2022 with debt service paid through the Literary

Fund. The amended budget includes authorization for VPSA equipment notes totaling approximately \$57.3 million in FY 2022 to be issued in the spring of 2022 as Series XXII.

Chapter 552, 2021 Special Session I General Assembly, maintains grant amounts at \$26,000 per eligible school (i.e., for K-12 schools reporting fall membership as of September 30, 2021, as well as for regional vocational, special education, and alternative education programs, academic year Governor's Schools, Code RVA Regional High School, and the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind) and \$50,000 per school division. The proposed FY 2022 budget also authorizes funding for supplemental grants supporting the Virginia e-Learning Backpack Initiative, which is described below.

The proposed FY 2022 budget also authorizes \$12.0 million from the Series XXII notes for division grants to fund school security equipment grants. These grants will be awarded on a competitive basis through applications submitted to VDOE by August 1, 2022. Divisions may be awarded up to \$250,000 in grant funding for eligible schools and regional programs.

Virginia e-Learning Backpack Initiative Supplemental Grant

Schools that administer SOL tests in spring 2021 and that are not fully accredited for the second consecutive year based on school accreditation ratings in effect for FY 2021 and FY 2022 will qualify to participate in the e-Learning Backpack Initiative in FY 2022 according to Chapter 552, 2021 Special Session I General Assembly. Schools eligible to receive this supplemental grant in FY 2022 shall continue to receive the grant for the number of subsequent years equaling the number of grades 9 through 12 in the qualifying school up to a maximum of four years (to support school wide implementation). Schools are eligible to receive these grants for a period of up to four years and will not be eligible to receive a subsequent award in the future once the original award period has concluded. Schools that are fully accredited or that are new schools with conditional accreditation in their first year are not eligible to receive this supplemental grant. Eligible schools receiving this grant will also continue to receive the existing \$26,000 grant supporting the SOL Web-based Technology Initiative. School divisions with schools eligible for this initiative may begin implementation during the 2021-2022 school year prior to the availability of the Series XXII proceeds by executing a reimbursement resolution. This action will require a local source of funds to pay qualifying expenditures up front pending the availability of the notes proceeds in late May

2022. The list of eligible schools and estimated grant amounts for the e-Learning Backpack Initiative to be funded through the Series XXII notes will be available in fall 2021.

Other Series XXII Information

According to Chapter 552, 2021 Special Session I General Assembly, all program requirements for the Series XXII notes, including the eligibility criteria, qualifying use of proceeds, local matching requirements, and the reimbursement process, are all the same as the Series XXI notes described above.

Chapter 552, 2021 Special Session I General Assembly, updates the number of schools eligible for funding under the VPSA technology grants. Funding to school divisions for the VPSA technology grant program is proposed to increase by \$1.2 million in FY 2022 based on an anticipated increase in the number of eligible schools in FY 2022. **Attachment F lists the estimated local grant allocations** for the Series XXII notes.

School divisions that have spent all of the Series XVII, Series XVIII, Series XIX, Series XX, and Series XXI notes proceeds and that have adopted a reimbursement resolution for the Series XXII (Spring 2022) notes issue may make qualifying purchases in support of the SOL Web-based Technology Initiative or, for eligible schools, the Virginia e-Learning Backpack Initiative, to be reimbursed from Series XXII proceeds; however, please be aware that the note proceeds will not be available for reimbursement until after the closing of the notes sale, which will likely be in May or June 2022. Please be aware that, prior to incurring any costs, the local school board must state its intention to use the proceeds of the equipment notes to reimburse qualifying expenditures, including for the Virginia e-Learning Backpack Initiative supplemental grants. This must be done through a reimbursement resolution adopted by the local school board. A **sample resolution is provided as Attachment G**. Please note that divisions may not reimburse themselves for project-related expenditures incurred more than 60 days prior to the adoption of the reimbursement resolution.

Required Signatures for VPSA Educational Technology Equipment Reimbursements

All requests for reimbursement of the Educational Technology Equipment Notes (any active series) through the VPSARP application must contain a digital certification of the division

superintendent or the superintendent's designee. Please verify the designee information contained in the Educational Registry Application, located in the SSWS portal, for accuracy. The VDOE will only accept the signature of staff currently registered as a superintendent's designee in this application.

For more information

If you have questions relating to the financing or determination of qualifying VPSA notes reimbursements, please contact the [Budget Office staff](#) or call (804) 225-2025. If you have questions relating to qualifying equipment (i.e., hardware, software) that may be purchased from the VPSA note proceeds, please contact the Technology and Virtual Learning Coordinator, Mark.Saunders@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 786-0307.

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- A. Attachment: [Series XXI VPSA Notes Issue Estimated Local Grant Allocation](#) (XLSX)
- B. Attachment: [Series XVII VPSA Notes Issue Local Grant Balances](#) (XLSX)
- C. Attachment: [Series XVIII VPSA Notes Issue Local Grant Balances](#) (XLSX)
- D. Attachment: [Series XIX VPSA Notes Issue Local Grant Balances](#) (XLSX)
- E. Attachment: [Series XX VPSA Notes Issue Local Grant Balances](#) (XLSX)
- F. Attachment: [Series XXII VPSA Notes Issue Estimated Local Grant Allocation](#) (XLSX)
- G. Attachment: [Sample Reimbursement Resolution](#) (DOCX)