



**#142-21**

**Commonwealth of Virginia  
Virginia Department of Education  
Superintendent's Memo #142-21**

DATE: May 28, 2021  
TO: Division Superintendents  
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction  
SUBJECT: **Professional Standards for New School Nutrition Directors and the New Director's Academy**

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance to school food authorities (SFAs) in meeting the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) professional standards and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) requirements when hiring a new director to manage school nutrition programs (SNPs), which includes attending the VDOE-SNP sponsored New Director's Academy. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 required that the USDA create professional standards for state and local school nutrition program personnel, including hiring standards for new school nutrition directors. Regulations outlining the professional standards can be found at 7 CFR § 210.30: *SFAs must ensure that all newly hired school nutrition program directors meet the minimum hiring standards, complete the minimum annual training requirements, and attend the VDOE-SNP sponsored New Director's Academy.*

### **Requirements for New Directors**

A newly hired school nutrition program director is defined as hired on or after July 1, 2018. SFAs must complete **Attachment A** and submit the form to the VDOE school nutrition program office within 30 days of employment of a new director and signed by the local division superintendent. Documentation that the new director meets the minimum hiring standards must be attached. The local school nutrition program administrator is responsible for the operation of the school nutrition program and must be the contact for all VDOE-SNP

communications and designated as the school nutrition program administrator in the SNPWeb system. The VDOE will monitor compliance with the professional standards as part of the administrative review process.

## Hiring Standards for New School Nutrition Program Directors

Hiring criteria depend on local education agency (LEA) enrollment size. As enrollment increases, program demands and complexity increase as well. Minimum requirements are higher for LEAs with enrollments of 10,000 or more students than for smaller divisions. In each enrollment category, the standards encourage directors with the minimum education degree to pursue advanced coursework toward the next higher degree in a related field. The USDA developed the [Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs](#) as a resource for SFAs in hiring and training staff. Along with the hiring standards below, the new director must acquire eight hours of food safety training within five years prior or within 30 days after their start date. The hiring criteria are detailed below.

### Category 1 - 2,499 students or less

- Bachelor's Degree in a specific/related major\* (experience preferred, not required);  
**OR**
- Bachelor's Degree in any academic major AND one year of relevant food service experience; **OR**
- Associate's Degree in specific/related major\* AND one year of relevant food service experience; **OR**
- High School Diploma (or GED) AND 3 years\*\* of relevant food service experience.

### Category 2 - 2,500 students to 9,999 students

- Bachelor's Degree in a specific/related major\* (experience preferred, not required);  
**OR**
- Bachelor's Degree in any academic major AND two years of relevant school nutrition experience; **OR**
- Associate's Degree in specific/related major\* AND two years of relevant school nutrition experience.

### Category 3 - 10,000 students or more

- Bachelor's Degree in a specific/related major\* (experience preferred, not required);  
**OR**
- Bachelor's Degree in any academic major AND state recognized certificate for school nutrition directors\*\*\*; **OR**
- Bachelor's Degree in any major AND five years of school nutrition program management.

\*Specific/related major: Academic major or concentration in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field.

\*\*For LEA enrollments less than 500, the VDOE may approve the hiring of a candidate with a high school diploma (or GED) and less than the required years of experience, if the best qualified candidate.

\*\*\*Virginia does not currently have a certificate that meets this requirement. The School Nutrition Association's certificate or credential (School Nutrition Specialist) cannot be used in lieu of this requirement.

### New Director's Academy

The *New Director's Academy: Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership* is designed for both new directors and those who are aspiring to become school nutrition directors. This training is also applicable to staff responsible for school nutrition programs, but are not in the role of School Nutrition Program Director. There is no charge for the course or materials. This is a great opportunity for professional development and networking. Participants who attend the Academy will receive 30.5 units of professional development.

The VDOE-SNP will offer this training virtually through Zoom in nine four-hour segments over the course of three weeks during **October/November 2021**. This timeline was recommended by the SNP Advisory Council in an effort to accommodate unique challenges and busy schedules this school year. All segments will be recorded and the recordings will be released after the live training to accommodate scheduling conflicts. Training dates and registration information can be found in **Attachment B** to this memo. Participants must register for and

attend all segments to receive credit for the training. Upon registration, participants will receive a confirmation email with details for joining each segment and **a hard copy of the Participant's Workbook will be mailed to the address provided on the [Segment 1 Registration Form](#)**. A detailed agenda will be emailed to participants prior to the first segment.

### For more information

Please direct any questions to the VDOE-SNP Training, Program Improvement, and Grants Supervisor, Kelly Shomo, via email at [Kelly.Shomo@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Kelly.Shomo@doe.virginia.gov).

SCC/KS/cc

- A. Attachment: [Certification of New School Nutrition Program Director](#) (DOCX)
- B. Attachment: [2021 New Director's Academy Dates and Registration Links](#) (DOCX)