# Superintendent’s Memo #033-20

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**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA   
Department of Education**

DATE: January 7, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Governor Northam’s Commission on African American History Education to Hold Listening Sessions

On August 24th Governor Ralph Northam signed [Executive Order Thirty-Nine](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-39-Establishment-of-the-Commission-on-African-American-History-Education-in-the-Commonwealth.pdf) establishing the Commission on African American History Education. The Governor charged the group with reviewing Virginia’s history standards, and the instructional practices, content, and resources currently used to teach African American history in the Commonwealth. The Commission will also examine and make recommendations on the professional development supports needed to equip all teachers for culturally competent instruction.

The African American History Education Commission is seeking community input through a series of listening sessions meant to further engage families, educators, and community members. Each session provides a platform for the public to share their experiences, insights, and suggestions on how to best strengthen the Virginia history standards, as well as the teaching of African American history. The valued input of all education stakeholders is encouraged at the sessions.

The dates and locations of the sessions are as follows:

**Tuesday, February 11**

Harrison Museum of African American Culture

One Market Square Southeast, #2

Roanoke, Virginia 24011

**Wednesday, February 12**

Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia

122 West Leigh Street

Richmond, Virginia 23220

**Wednesday, March 11**

Norfolk State University

Nursing and General Education Building

Room 101, 700 Park Avenue

Norfolk, Virginia 23504

**Thursday, March 12**

Woodbridge Middle School

2201 York Drive

Woodbridge, Virginia 22191

**DATE TO BE DETERMINED**

J.M. Langston High School

228 Cleveland Street

Danville, Virginia 24541

**All listening sessions will take place from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM.** Sessions will begin with a moderated panel discussion facilitated by the members of the Commission, followed by public comment. Speakers will have three minutes each to address the Commission.

Governor Northam’s executive order also directed the Virginia Department of Education, in collaboration with Virtual Virginia, WHRO Public Media, history teachers, university historians, and college professors, to develop a high school-level African American history course.

More information about Governor Northam’s African American History Education Commission and the public listening sessions is available on [the Commission’s website](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001NVd3FQgqqP5APky0nSaikAW32ppH40etflJfZ4Nd3ec__NkVpXF8_t1xEBDBsgmChW45mbIKdKshoQjJ0gVKzbxj-SqbGCTh2lFCBU28LyiWWXI3zzderVagpW_HGFEMPbt5HZPGEGsn_iEuz2xQriUhbCaNdjQLP0SvCfjsSQgOe4_3OCsoBH8Udvjmw2X9&c=ZngqVkkbQMg9bcDlg_rNfhmFS6OoV3GmuWyOJJnB6rnGYL-f5PHFnA==&ch=GLYU3XNrZv0XaR7gDClNtdhZB0I1_8dwqYXh9C2oYSeuixKiKmhmjA==). If you have any questions, please contact Jenné Nurse in the Office of Equity and Community Engagement at [jenne.nurse@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:jenne.nurse@doe.virginia.gov).

JFL/LDW/jvn