



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: October 5, 2018
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Autism Training for Transportation Providers**

The purpose of this memo is to announce the creation of a Board of Education approved training program, focused on supporting students with autism spectrum disorders.

The 2018 Virginia General Assembly approved SB 229, which states, in part,

B. The Board of Education shall establish a training program for school board employees who assist in the transportation of students on school buses, including individuals employed to operate school buses and school bus aides, on autism spectrum disorders, including the characteristics of autism spectrum disorders, strategies for interacting with students with autism spectrum disorders, and collaboration with other employees who assist in the transportation of students on school buses. Each school board employee who assists in the transportation of students with autism spectrum disorders on school buses shall participate in such training program.

The Virginia Department of Education, through Virginia Commonwealth University's Autism Center for Excellence (VCU-ACE) has developed online training modules to meet the requirements outlined in § 22.1-298.3 of the *Code of Virginia*.

At the Board of Education's meeting on September 20, 2018, the VCU-ACE modules were approved to fill this requirement.

The online modules are available at no cost. Completion of all training requirements will take between two and three hours and will vary based on trainees' participation in the discussion component. The online format allows several delivery options to meet the unique needs of the individual and/or school division.

1. Small Group (preferred) – Trainees meet and view modules as a group with facilitated discussion between each module. Ideally, the discussion will be co-facilitated by division transportation and special education staff. This option allows participants to access the expertise of each staff member and models the collaborative process highlighted in the training modules.
2. Autonomous – Participants meet in a predetermined location and complete modules in whole or in parts, with facilitated discussion following each module.
3. Individual participation – Individual may access the training modules through the MyACE Dashboard. Participants are required to create an account through Credly, an online badging system. Participants will view video modules and complete a summative quiz to complete the training. Participants may complete modules over several sessions. Participants will be responsible for submitting a certificate of completion to their division. Individuals may access this content by visiting the [ACE Transportation](#) webpage.

If you have any questions regarding the content or format of the training, please contact Daniel Irwin, Autism Specialist, at Daniel.Irwin@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 371-7421. If you have transportation related questions, contact Kerry Miller, Associate Director for Pupil Transportation, at Kerry.Miller@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-2772. For technical questions regarding the online modules, contact Joshua Taylor, VCU-ACE Training Associate, at jtaylor66@vcu.edu or (804) 827-2885.

JFL/DI