



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education**

January 13, 2017

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Governor McAuliffe and Virginia Council on Women Announce the 6th Annual STEM Essay Contest**

On behalf of the Department of Education, I am pleased to announce that Governor Terence R. McAuliffe and the Virginia Council on Women have announced the 6th Annual STEM essay Contest. The Council will award five scholarships (one in each of five regions) to a female junior or senior who will be pursuing a STEM education at an institution of higher education. Essays will be judged by a panel of Council members and women who hold a degree in or work in STEM fields.

I encourage you to share this opportunity with principals, teachers, parents and students in your school divisions. The Council will award five \$5,000 scholarships to female junior or senior high school students who will be pursuing a STEM career at an institution of higher education. One scholarship will be awarded in each of five geographic regions across the state. Additional scholarships may be awarded at the discretion of the Council.

The STEM Essay Contest was launched in 2012 with 170 young ladies from across the Commonwealth submitting essays focusing on the student's vision for a future STEM education or career. Last year, the Council received 505 essay submissions and distributed \$36,000 in scholarships to four graduating seniors.

This year's winners will be notified by March 27, 2017 and be presented at an awards reception at Virginia's Executive Mansion in the spring. For more information about this scholarship program please visit: <http://commonwealth.virginia.gov/council-on-women/stem-essay-contest/>.

**Who is eligible?**

To be eligible, one must be a female or identify as a female, reside in Virginia, be a junior or senior in high school and hold at least a 2.5 GPA.

**How to apply?**

Applications and guidelines are available online here: <http://commonwealth.virginia.gov/council-on-women/stem-essay-contest/>. Entries must be submitted online by 11:59 p.m. on **February 20, 2017**.

SRS/LW/dr

