



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

March 31, 2017

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: 90th Annual Virginia Middle and High School Principals Conference & Exposition – June 25-June 28, 2017 (School Law Clinic, June 25, 2017)

Virginia's only statewide conference for middle level and high school principals is the Annual Virginia Middle and High School Principals Conference & Exposition. This will be the 90th consecutive year the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP) and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) have collaborated to develop and enhance middle level and high school administrators' leadership skills, increase their understanding of current educational issues, and expand their knowledge base for success. The Conference will be held June 25-28, 2017, at the Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk Waterfront Hotel, 425 Water Street, Portsmouth, Virginia 23704. A cordial invitation is extended to principals, assistant principals, division superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors of instruction, supervisors, college personnel, and administrators of nonpublic middle and high schools to attend.

The theme for this year's Conference is "**Principal Leadership – Discover '18.**" It represents the leadership potential and authority of school principals to make a difference in the education of Virginia's youth. While we know that a great teacher can create and sustain a great classroom, only a principal can create and sustain a great school. The right principal can have an enormous impact on students. Principals indeed are the linchpins in the enormously complex workings, both physical and human, of a school.

There will be a Conference emphasis on the Standards of Learning innovation changes and the growing responsibilities of school principals and assistant principals. Among the topics included are understanding the importance of high instructional quality and expectations, translating data into action, developing effective teams, leading a change effort, and creating meaningful engagement with community and external partners. Although the Commonwealth has policies, metrics, and rubrics in place, school principals and assistant principals need to not only be comfortable in their knowledge of this information, but also be able to implement them effectively, synergistically, and strategically. It is important that school principals set school expectations that incorporate national, state, and local mandates in guiding student achievement, requiring quality instructional delivery, and pursuing leadership goals for success. This Conference addresses state mandates important to school administrators.

The **Title II, Part A – Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting funds** may be used to support attendance at this Conference. The Conference program addresses the key principles of professional development for principals. Attending the summer Conference will provide participants opportunities to explore their leadership strengths and how they can be enhanced to generate a school culture of performance success.

The *VDOE Colloquium* will address recent state mandates and the school leadership expectations of principals. In addition, the Colloquium will focus on resources and implementation strategies that have been successfully used in schools to improve instruction in the core curriculum areas—mathematics, science, English, and history/social science.

The *Professional Practices Symposium* will focus on exemplary practices that excel in content delivery for students in today's schools. The fast-paced learning environment necessitated by the global economy requires a competitive edge. Principals must understand, appreciate, and implement effective performance systems.

The *School Law Clinic*, a preconference activity, will be held on Sunday, June 25, 2017. **Learning Labs** will include pertinent topics identified in the recent statewide *2017 Middle Level and High School Principals Needs Assessment* which include nine (9) strands: 1) School Leadership, Administration, and Management; 2) SOL/Curriculum and Instruction/Remediation; 3) SOA/Accountability; 4) Reauthorization of ESSA/AMOP/Teacher Quality & Evaluation/LEP/Special Education; 5) Assessment and Data Analysis; 6) Instructional Technology; 7) Student Services and Programs (e.g., school safety, discipline, dropout prevention); 8) Personal (e.g., stress management, time management, health and fitness awareness); and 9) Educational Law and Policy.

The 2017 summer Conference will officially begin with an opening general session at 10 a.m. on Monday, June 26, 2017. A preliminary Conference program synopsis, Conference At-A-Glance, is provided in Attachment A. The detailed announcement about the general session speakers, workshop presenters, topics, etc., will be sent via VASSP email blast and posted on the Association's website.

The Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk Waterfront Hotel will house all the Conference programs. A Conference registration form (see Attachment B) is provided with this memorandum. Please duplicate the form as needed and share this information with persons who would be interested in attending the Conference. To take advantage of EARLY REGISTRATION, the registration form must be completed and returned by May 24, 2017, to Summer Conference, VASSP, 4909 Cutshaw Avenue, Richmond, VA 23230.

Hotel accommodations are available on a first-come, first-serve basis and we encourage you to return the enclosed accommodations application form to the hotel (see Attachment C) as soon as possible. All rooms not confirmed with a reservation by May 24, 2017, will be released.

The hotel accommodation form is to be sent via U.S. Mail directly to the Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk Waterfront Hotel. Only the enclosed official accommodation form will be accepted by the hotel. As in past years, the hotel will not accept telephone requests for room reservations (this includes facsimile), written letters, online, or in-person requests. This procedure helps to assure some degree of fairness so that everyone has an opportunity to receive the Conference announcement and respond in a timely fashion.

We look forward to seeing you in June. If you have questions about the Conference or desire additional information, please visit the VASSP website at www.vassp.org or call the Association at (804) 355-2777.

SRS/SMC/oml

Attachments:

- A. [Conference At-A-Glance](#) (PDF)
- B. [Early Registration Form](#) (PDF)
- C. [Accommodation Form](#) (PDF)