



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DATE: February 24, 2023

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Journey into Teaching Academy: A Professional Development Initiative for Selected Second-Year, Provisionally Certified Special Education Teachers

The Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE's), Department of Special Education and Student Services is announcing its fifth cohort of the Journey into Teaching Academy. The Academy is a yearlong professional development initiative for teachers completing their second year of teaching by the end of the 2022-2023 school year (SY) and entering their third year of teaching during the 2023-2024 SY as a provisionally licensed special education teacher.

In Virginia, special education is considered the number one critical shortage area for teachers. The Journey into Teaching Academy is designed as a program to provide teacher support beyond mentorship to enhance the retention, as well as the overall performance of provisionally licensed special education teachers.

This year-long initiative (May 2023-May 2024) will include a two-hour virtual orientation on **May 18, 2023**, 4:30-6:30 p.m., followed by the Summer Academy, **July 24-27, 2023**, at the Virginia Tech/University of Virginia Center, located at 2810 Parham Road, Richmond, Virginia 23294. The Summer Academy will meet daily 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Additional Saturday workshops will be held during the 2023-2024 SY on **October 14, 2023, February 17, 2024, and April 20, 2024**, at the Virginia Tech/University of Virginia Center. Selected participants will receive a \$1,000 stipend for successful completion of the Summer Academy and any other relevant activities.

The Journey into Teaching Academy is designed to be a competitive application process. Priority will be given to teachers from divisions that have been identified by the VDOE. Approximately 30 participants will be selected for Cohort 5.

The selection process requires completion of the [2023-2024 Cohort of Journey into Teaching Academy: Teacher Application](#) and the [Administrator's Recommendation form](#). All candidates must:

- have successfully completed or will complete two years of successful teaching as documented in an administrator's recommendation and/or evaluation;
- hold an active, provisional Virginia teaching license;
- be actively engaged in taking coursework to satisfy licensure requirement;
- be continuing their contract with their current school division for the 2023-2024 SY; and
- submit the Journey into Teaching Academy Teacher Application, and an Administrator's Recommendation form must be completed for the teacher.

Completed applications and recommendations are due to VDOE by **April 1, 2023**. A committee will review the applications and select participants based on the above criteria. The applicants selected will reflect a balanced division representation based on the number of applicants. Once applications are reviewed, notification and information on upcoming events will be sent via email by April 12, 2023, to selected participants. Applicants who are not chosen for this fifth cohort will be also notified by April 12, 2023.

For questions regarding this academy, please contact Kristin Williams-Faus, Mathematics and Special Education Specialist, at (804) 225-2016 or Kristin.Williams-Faus@doe.virginia.gov; Deborah Johnson, Intellectual Disabilities Specialist, at (804) 371-2725 or Deborah.Johnson@doe.virginia.gov; or Dr. Zenia Burnett, Director of Instructional Services, at (804) 225-2707 or Zenia.Burnett@doe.virginia.gov.

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