



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
**Department of Education**

**DATE:** July 21, 2017  
**TO:** Division Superintendents  
**FROM:** Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**SUBJECT: Formative Assessment Online Professional Development**

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) will make an online formative assessment professional development opportunity available beginning in October 2017. School teams electing to participate will complete structured activities correlated to online modules developed by the Center of Standards and Assessment Implementation and will use formative assessment strategies embedded in classroom instruction to enhance student learning. The modules were developed from the work of Dr. Margaret Heritage, noted expert on formative assessment. These modules represent evidence-based practices for promoting formative assessment strategies in the classroom drawn from years of work with teachers. The modules have been used by educators across the country to support teachers in this process.

Schools across the Commonwealth that have previously completed these modules through a pilot program supported by VDOE report an increase in effective formative assessment practices by teachers and associate increased student learning with these practices. These schools established formative assessment professional learning communities (PLCs) that met every two weeks for 60 minutes each session over a two-year period. Each PLC included a facilitator (usually the principal or assistant principal) and a group of between four and eight teachers. PLCs worked through activities from the formative assessment modules at their home schools, implemented activities in their classrooms, and reflected or reported results online within a private Google+ community that included other participating PLCs. Virginia public schools electing to complete the professional development through activities that include interaction with other PLCs within the online community would complete the modules and accompanying activities from October 2017 through April 2019. School teams electing this format for participation should ensure all members have joined the Google+ community and work through the activities outlined in the Orientation PowerPoint prior to October 22, 2017.

Virginia public schools may also elect to use the formative assessment modules and structured activities on their own, without becoming part of an interactive private online community. Facilitators for Virginia public schools electing to complete the professional development on their own will have online access to the modules, materials, and suggested schedule.

Suggested guidelines associated with participation in the program and a registration form are included in the Attachment, "Formative Assessment Online Professional Development Participation 2017-2019." Please return the completed, signed registration to VDOE by August 18, 2017.

If you have questions about participation in the Formative Assessment Online Professional Development program, please contact the student assessment staff by email at [student\\_assessment@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov) or by phone at (804) 225-2102.

SRS/SLR/cd

Attachment:

- A. [Formative Assessment Online Professional Development Participation 2017-2019](#) (Word)

