



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

February 12, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Nominations for the Aspiring Special Education Leaders Academy**

I am pleased to announce that the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is planning for the ninth cohort of its Aspiring Special Education Leaders Academy. This special education leadership initiative, established in 2008 to assist school divisions and state-operated programs with succession planning, is designed to help prepare potential leaders for administrative positions in special education. Through a yearlong program (August 2016 to August 2017) that will include a three-day workshop in August 2016, followed by monthly, two-day seminars, observations, assignments, and field experiences, cohort members will have opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and experiences that will help them to excel in positions of special education leadership.

The VDOE is now accepting one application per school division, state-operated program, regional program and training/technical assistance center for Academy participation. Approximately 30 participants will be selected for Cohort 9. While all of the above-referenced entities are invited to nominate promising special education leaders, preference will be given to those who have not had participants in past cohorts. Candidates for the Academy may include administrators holding entry level positions, teachers, student services staff members, and related services staff members who have demonstrated leadership. All candidates must possess at least a master's degree or be near completion and be endorsed by their special education director and division Superintendent or designee. Divisions and programs are encouraged to consider internal competitions prior to submitting their nominee.

The final selection process is competitive, and a committee will review applications and select participants based on the following criteria:

- Strength of candidate's written statement as described in the application.
- Experiences in special education and accomplishments as reflected in a résumé.
- Strength of recommendation by candidate's supervisor or program manager.
- Endorsement by special education director and division superintendent or designee.
- Balanced representation, including regional representation.

The VDOE will fund costs associated with lodging, breakfast and lunch each meeting day, speaker fees, and relevant materials. School divisions or other sending agencies will assume costs related to mileage reimbursement, dinner on the meeting days, and substitutes.

An application to participate in this program is attached and may also be found at the following Web site: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/tech\\_asst\\_prof\\_dev/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/tech_asst_prof_dev/index.shtml) by selecting the Leadership Academy's link.

Please note that candidates must submit their applications to your office through your director of special education. This gives you the opportunity to add your endorsement and submit the application packet for your recommended nominee. Application packets must be submitted to Beverly Wynter, executive secretary, Office of the Assistant Superintendent, Division of Special Education and Student Services, and postmarked by April 18, 2016. Candidates and nominators will be notified of selection outcomes in May 2016.

Thank you for your support as we begin the seventh year of this initiative and continue efforts to assist you in identifying and preparing future special education leaders. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Wynter via e-mail at [Beverly.Wynter@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Beverly.Wynter@doe.virginia.gov) or by telephone at (804) 786-8079.

SRS/JE/bw

Attachments:

- A. [Supts Memo 026-16 Attachment A Application](#) (Word)
- B. [Supts Memo 026-16 Attachment B Recommendation](#) (Word)