



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

October 18, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Critical Shortage Positions

The following information about critical shortage positions is being provided in response to several recent inquiries from school administrators regarding the re-employment of retired teachers.

A retired member of the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) with previous service as a local school board instructional or administrative employee may be hired by a school division to fill a vacancy in a critical shortage area with no interruption of retirement benefits, if specified requirements are met.

School divisions are surveyed annually in order to identify critical shortage teacher endorsement areas. Shortages by subject matter are designated from the top 10 academic disciplines identified as having shortages through the annual survey. For this school year, the disciplines are special education; elementary education preK-6; middle education grades 6-8; career and technical education; mathematics grades 6-12 (including Algebra I); school counselor PreK-12; foreign languages preK-12; English (secondary); health and physical education preK-12; and history and social science (secondary).

In addition, critical shortages by geographic region may be designated for any position vacancy for which a school division receives three or fewer qualified candidates (i.e., licensed or eligible for a license).

A retiree may teach or serve as a principal or assistant principal in a designated critical shortage position and continue to receive VRS benefits, provided the retiree:

- Is licensed and endorsed by the Virginia Board of Education for the position he or she will hold;
- Has a break in service of at least 12 consecutive months between the retirement date and the date of hire in a critical shortage position. This break means not working in any full-time, part-time, or temporary position with any VRS-participating employer;
- Has not retired with a reduced VRS benefit under an early retirement incentive program (ERIP);
- Has not taken a refund of member contributions and interest or deferred retirement; and
- Had no pre-employment commitment, either verbal or written, with the school division prior to the VRS retirement date.

At the time of employment and by **November 1** of each school year, school divisions that are employing critical shortage personnel must complete and return to VRS a certification of eligibility for critical shortage teachers and administrators for each individual: <http://www.varetire.org/pdf/forms/vrs-160.pdf>.

Again, this opportunity is currently available for any position in the top 10 academic disciplines identified as having shortages or any position for which three or fewer qualified candidates applied, subject to the conditions set forth above.

School divisions should consult with their VRS program representative regarding any questions relating to the eligibility of individual retirees or VRS certification requirements. Other questions may be directed to Susan Williams, VDOE Policy Director, at Susan.B.Williams@doe.virginia.gov or by phone at 804-371-0558.

SRS/SBW/bj

