



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

September 26, 2014

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Virginia's Microsoft IT Academy Program

Through funding provided by the General Assembly, the Virginia Department of Education is pleased to announce continuation of the Microsoft Information Technology (IT) Academy program partnership for the fourth year. Currently the Academy serves 364 high schools including career and technical education (CTE) centers and nearly 50,000 students.

The Microsoft IT Academy program includes an annual subscription for digital curriculum and instructional resources to prepare students with industry-recognized skills and certifications to meet the rising technology needs of business and industry. Additionally, participating high schools and CTE centers receive a twelve month site license for unlimited certification testing at no cost to school divisions for the Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook), and the Certiprep practice exams for all of the MOS applications. Also, a limited number of exam vouchers for the Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA) certifications will be available to all schools/centers, but distributed as needed.

The Microsoft IT Academy program offers many unique 21st century education benefits and fully prepares students to obtain internationally recognized IT industry certifications. More than 50 percent of today's jobs require proficiency with related IT skills. That number will increase to 77 percent within 10 years. Some of the other benefits schools can look forward to:

- Up to 50 licenses for Office 2010 or Office 2013 installed on the school lab computers;
- DreamSpark - designer software for school labs, instructor and student PCs;
- A full curriculum solution for teaching Microsoft Office products and first level IT/ Developer applications;
- Face-to-face, hands-on training during summer conferences;
- Direct teacher support through a dedicated e-mail alias;
- Monthly webinars through June 2015 for teachers and administrators; and
- Support for the registration and administration of certification testing with inclusion on a hosted collaboration secure site.

All high school students, including those enrolled in any CTE or academic class may access the virtual modules and upon completion take the appropriate MOS exam to earn one or more certifications. Under a separate cover, the CTE administrators and high school principals will receive detailed information for implementation of the Academy resources and certification exams.

If you have any questions, please contact Anne Rowe, curriculum and instruction coordinator, Office of Career and Technical Education Services, at cte@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at 804-225-3119.

