



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: October 5, 2018
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Services for Students Identified as Hearing or Visually Impaired**

The *Code of Virginia* at § 22.1-217.01 was amended and requires school boards to annually post information on school division websites and to inform the parents of students who are identified as hearing or visually impaired of its availability as follows:

“The Department of Education shall annually prepare and distribute to local school boards packets of information describing the educational and other services available through the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind, the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, and the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired to students who are identified as hearing impaired or visually impaired. Local school boards shall annually post this information on the school division's Web site and inform the parents of those students who are identified as hearing impaired or visually impaired of its availability. School boards shall ensure that packets of such information are available in an accessible format for review by parents who do not have Internet access.”

Attached is a compilation of the required guidance documents and additional resources that are available at the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) website: [Special Education-Sensory Disabilities](#). Administrators and teachers may reprint the VDOE guidance information to share with parents. School divisions may also provide paper copies as well as alternate formats at public schools and in public libraries.

Questions may be directed to Wanda Council, Education Specialist, Office of Special Education Instructional Services, at (804) 371-4059, or at Wanda.Council@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/WC

Attachment

- A. [Resources for Serving Students with Sensory Disabilities-2018 \(docx\)](#)

Virginia Department of Education Resources for Serving Students with Sensory Disabilities

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) provides information on educational services and resources to support students who are deaf and hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, or deaf-blind at its website. The following links to information and resources are excerpted from the VDOE's website at [Special Education-Specific Disabilities-Sensory Disabilities](#):

Guidance Documents

- [Guidelines for Working With Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Virginia Public Schools](#)
- [Guidelines for Working With Students Who are Blind or Visually Impaired in Virginia Public Schools-Revised 2017](#)
- [Unified English Braille Implementation Plan for Virginia Public Schools-Revised September 2017](#)

State Agencies

- [Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind \(VSDB\)](#) - The VSDB is located in Staunton, Virginia and provides a K-12 educational day program, outreach services, and residential services exclusively for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, or deaf-blind. The [VSDB Outreach Services](#) assist early intervention providers, local school divisions, and families in meeting the needs of children across the Commonwealth. The VSDB's admissions policy is available at its website.
 - Contact: Pat Trice, Superintendent, at Patricia.Trice@vsdbs.virginia.gov or (540) 332-9000
- [Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired \(DBVI\)](#) - The DBVI's education services program provides services to early intervention providers, school personnel, and families to help children to be successful in school and the community, and to prepare for the future. The [Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired](#) offers training in the skills of blindness. The [Library and Resource Center](#) provides services to local school divisions to support the education of children who are blind or visually impaired and persons who are print disabled.
 - Contact: Caren Phipps, Director of Services for Children and Youth, at Caren.Phipps@dbvi.virginia.gov or (804) 625-3972
- [Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing \(VDDHH\)](#) - The VDDHH provides standards for educational interpreting services and other services to reduce the communication barriers between persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families and the professionals who serve them.
 - Contact: Eric Raff, Director, at eric.raff@vddhh.virginia.gov or (804) 404-9090

Specialty Centers and Programs

- [Accessible Instructional Materials Center-Virginia \(AIM-VA\)](#) - The AIM-VA's extensive library has developed an alternative system of providing accessible educational media under standards set by federal law to students who meet the federal requirements for print disabilities and who are eligible for accessing educational media under an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as required under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The AIM-VA, in conjunction with partnering agencies, provides required accessible educational materials to students with an IEP and training for staff, at no cost to Local Educational Agencies.
 - Contact: AIM-VA Help Desk, at aimva@gmu.edu or (866) 926-1879
- [Radford University Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program](#) - Radford University offers Virginia's only academic program leading to Virginia teacher licensure with an endorsement in Special Education-Hearing Impairment PreK-12. Courses are taught through combined on-campus, distance education, and varied educational field experiences. The comprehensive program teaches all communication/instructional approaches used with students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Tuition assistance is available for qualified Virginia teachers.
 - Contact: Karen Stinson, Graduate Advisor, at kastinson@radford.edu or (540) 831-5549
- [Technical Assistance Center for Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing \(TAC-DHH\)](#) - The TAC-DHH provides training and technical assistance pertaining to students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Assistance is available to local public school divisions as well as early intervention and preschool programs through the Virginia Network of Consultants for Professionals Working with Children Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VNOG).
 - Contact: Ann Hughes, Coordinator, at awhughes@vcu.edu or (804) 828-1342
- [Virginia Consortium for Teacher Preparation in Visual Impairment \(VI Consortium\)](#) - The VI Consortium is the only academic program in Virginia for teacher preparation leading to Virginia teacher licensure with an endorsement in Special Education-Visual Impairment PreK-12. Classes are offered through combined on-campus, video, and web conferencing through five universities: George Mason, James Madison, Norfolk State, Old Dominion, and Radford. Tuition assistance is available for qualified Virginia teachers.
 - Contact: Kimberly Avila, Coordinator, at kavila@gmu.edu or (703) 993-5625
- [Virginia Hearing Aid Loan Bank \(HALB\)](#) - The HALB provides hearing aids and FM systems for children in Virginia under age 18 whose hearing loss is confirmed by an audiologist. Devices are loaned for free for up to six months while families/school divisions are waiting for a permanent device to arrive.
 - Contact: Lisa Powley at BRCCC@virginia.edu or (866) 596-9367
- [Virginia Project for Children and Young Adults With Deaf-Blindness \(VDBP\)](#) - The VDBP provides technical assistance, training, distance education, and networking information to families and service providers of children who are deaf-blind/dual sensory impaired.
 - Contact: Julie Durando, Project Director, at jdurando@vcu.edu or (804) 828-8252

- Professional Development for Educational Interpreters - The VDOE provides grant funding to assist Virginia educational interpreters and cued language transliterators with acquiring and maintaining the skills and qualifications that are required to work with children who are deaf and hard of hearing in Virginia public schools. Free regional workshops and 1:1 mentoring support are available. American Sign Language-English Interpretation programs and courses are offered at [Reynolds Community College](#), [Northern Virginia Community College](#), [Tidewater Community College](#), [Radford University](#), and [Liberty University](#).

For additional information, please contact:
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Virginia Department of Education
Wanda.Council@doe.virginia.gov
(804) 371-4059

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