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James F. Lane, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUPERINTENDENT'S EMAIL

Contact: John Hendron, 804-225-4387

DATE: February 17, 2021

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUPT'S EMAIL: Opportunity for Team Training in Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) was established as a category of disability under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* in 1990. Since then, educators have become more aware of the unique needs and challenges students present as they enter school after experiencing TBI in early childhood, or return to school after being injured, such as from concussions. Most school personnel do not receive pre-service training on the effects of TBI.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services outlined a model for building local or regional teams to meet the needs of students with TBI. The model calls for careful selections of team members, training over a period of several months, long-term mentoring, and ongoing support. This comprehensive approach is designed to assure that training will carry over into classroom practices that have a positive impact on students. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has emulated this model with the first ten cohorts of teams from school divisions across the Commonwealth selected from 2011 through 2020.

[Superintendent's Memo #017-19](#), *School Board Policies on Concussions in Students*, provided information regarding amendments to the *Code of Virginia* to include § 22.1-271.5 and § 22.1-271.6 directing the Board of Education to develop and distribute guidelines to school divisions dealing with concussions in students and requiring each school division to develop policies and procedures regarding the identification and handling of suspected concussions in students. Each school division is required to develop policies and procedures regarding the identification and handling of suspected concussions in students that address the academic needs and gradual reintroduction of cognitive demands.

The VDOE is seeking applications from school divisions for an eleventh cohort of teams to receive intensive professional development this summer, 2021, and ongoing support from state specialists. Eight selected teams will receive support that will focus on improving the division's/region's ability to provide high quality, research-based programming and support services for students with TBI.

Training:

Each team attending the training will consist of five members representing, but not limited to, the following disciplines: special education administrator (highly recommended), special education teacher, occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech/language pathologist, school nurse, school psychologist, and athletic trainer. A team may come from one school division, or a region may collaborate to select a team consisting of members from more than one school division.

All team members are required to attend the two-day virtual summer training, which will be held on July 12-13, 2021, and the one-day follow-up training in Spring 2022 in the Richmond area.

Selection criteria include:

- Number of students with TBI or reported concussions
- Geographic location
- Perceived needs and resources of division/region
- Other issues addressed in application narrative

Selected teams will be provided:

- Intensive professional development in the area of TBI/concussions through face-to-face training, webinars, and telephone conferences
- Numerous materials and online resources to assist with meeting needs of students with TBI/concussions
- Ongoing support from state specialists

Applications:

- To nominate a team, complete the [TBI Application](#).
- Completed applications are due to the VDOE by Friday, April 16, 2021; once applications are reviewed, notification will be sent to Team Leads via email by May 7, 2021.

If you have any questions or need assistance with the submission of an application, please contact Deborah Johnson, Specialist-Intellectual Disabilities, by phone at (804) 371-2725 or email at Deborah.Johnson@doe.virginia.gov.