



#278-21

**Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #278-21**

DATE: October 1, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Annual Resources for Serving Students with Sensory Disabilities**

As a reminder, 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 deaf or hard of 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 deaf or hard of hearing or visually impaired. Local school boards shall annually post this information on the school division’s website and inform the parents of those students who are identified as deaf or hard of hearing 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’s (VDOE’s)

[Sensory Disabilities](#) webpage. Administrators and teachers may reprint the VDOE's guidance and information to share with parents. School divisions may also provide printed copies as well as alternate formats in public schools and public libraries.

For more information

For questions regarding this guidance, contact Wanda Council, Education Specialist, in the Office of Special Education Instructional Services, by phone at (804) 371-4059, or email at Wanda.Council@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/WC/tc

- A. Attachment: [Annual Resources for Serving Students with Sensory Disabilities Revised October, 2021](#) (DOCX)

Virginia Department of Education
Annual Resources for Serving Students with Sensory Disabilities
(Revised 10/2021)

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 on its website. The following are links to information and resources excerpted from the VDOE's [Sensory Disabilities](#) webpage:

Guidance Documents

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- [Guidelines for Working With Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Virginia Public Schools \(Revised September 2019\)](#)
- [Virginia Communication Plan for a Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing \(Revised September 2019\)](#)

Blindness and Visual Impairment

- [Guidelines for Working With Students Who are Blind or Visually Impaired in Virginia Public Schools \(Revised December 2017\)](#)
- [Unified English Braille Implementation Plan for Virginia Public Schools \(Updated September 2019\)](#)

State Agencies

- The [Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind \(VSDB\)](#) is located in Staunton, Virginia and provides a Kindergarten (K)-12 educational day program, outreach services, and residential services exclusively for Virginia students who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, or deaf-blind. The [VSDB Outreach Services](#) assist early intervention programs, local school divisions, and families in meeting the needs of children with sensory disabilities across the Commonwealth. The VSDB's admissions policy is available on its website.
 - Contact: [Pat Trice, Superintendent](#) at (540) 332-9000
- The [Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired \(DBVI\)](#) education services program provides services to early intervention providers, school personnel, and families to help children with visual impairment, blindness and deaf-blindness 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 (804) 625-3972
- The [Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing \(VDDHH\)](#) 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 (800) 552-7917 V/TTY

Technical Assistance Centers

- The [Accessible Instructional Materials Center-Virginia \(AIM-VA\)](#) developed an extensive library and alternative system for 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 through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The AIM-VA, in conjunction with partnering agencies, provides required accessible educational materials to students and training for school division staff, at no cost to Local Educational Agencies.
 - Contact: [AIM-VA Help Desk](#) at (866) 926-1879
- The [Center for Family Involvement at the Partnership for People with Disabilities \(CFI\)](#) at Virginia Commonwealth University provides information and training to support children with disabilities, their families, and professionals.
 - Contact: CFI Office at (877) 567-1122 or TTY relay; (800) 828-1120
- The [Technical Assistance Center for Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing \(TAC-DHH\)](#) provides information, training, and technical assistance pertaining to children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Assistance is available to Virginia public school divisions, including early childhood special education and early intervention programs, through the Virginia Network of Consultants for Professionals (VNOC) Working with Children Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
 - Contact: [Tracey Yurechko, Project Director](#) at (804) 828-1342
- The [Virginia Hearing Aid Loan Bank \(HALB\)](#) provides hearing aids and FM systems for children in Virginia under age 18 whose hearing loss is confirmed by an audiologist. Devices are loaned at no cost for up to six months while families/school divisions are waiting for a permanent device to arrive.
 - Contact: [Lisa Powley, Coordinator](#) at (866) 596-9367
- The [Virginia Project for Children and Young Adults with Deaf-Blindness \(VDBP\)](#) provides technical assistance, training, distance education, and networking information to service providers and families of children with deaf-blindness/dual sensory disabilities.
 - Contact: [Ira Padhye, Project Director](#) at (804) 828-2052

Professional Training Programs

- [Radford University's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program](#) offers Virginia's only academic program leading to Virginia teacher licensure with an endorsement in Special Education-Deaf and Hard of Hearing 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 (540) 831-5549
- The [Virginia Consortium for Teacher Preparation in Visual Impairment \(VI Consortium\)](#) 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 three universities: George Mason, Old Dominion, and Radford. Tuition assistance is available for qualified Virginia teachers.
 - Contact: [Kimberly Avila, Coordinator](#) at (703) 993-5625

- The [Educational Interpreter Services and Training](#) VDOE provides grant funding to assist Virginia educational interpreters and cued language transliterators with acquiring and maintaining the required skills and qualifications to work with children who are deaf and hard of hearing in Virginia public schools. Free regional workshops and mentoring support are available.
 - Contact: [Marla Pollack, Region 4 Interpreter Training Grant Coordinator](#) at (571) 982-1504
 - American Sign Language-English Interpretation programs/courses are offered at the following Virginia community colleges and universities:
 - [Liberty University](#) Telephone: (434) 582-2064
 - [Northern Virginia Community College](#) Telephone: (703) 323-3192
 - [Radford University](#) Telephone: (540) 831-5549
 - [Reynolds Community College](#) Telephone: (804) 523-5604
 - [Tidewater Community College](#) Telephone: (757) 214-6157

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