

Education about cultural diversity includes, but is not limited to, strategies and programs that promote a school climate that is culturally responsive to all students. Diversity forums, cultural presentations, staff development training, and collaboration between school and community groups are just a few examples of effective approaches.

The proposed Board of Education's Leadership in Cultural Diversity Education Award would be given to schools and school divisions. Recipients will be presented with a certificate of recognition by the Board of Education for effectively providing educational opportunities that promote an understanding and responsiveness to cultural diversity. Their programs will be highlighted on the Web site of the Virginia Department of Education.

Summary of Major Elements:

A description of the award is attached. Criteria for the selection of a school or school division would include:

- Continuous development of strategies that encourage success for all students
- Sustained activities and programs that promote an atmosphere of inclusiveness for all students
- Ongoing activities that eliminate prejudice
- Development of innovative programs that promote cultural understanding

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education accept establishment of this award.

Impact on Resources:

Minimal

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

With the adoption of the Leadership in Cultural Diversity Education Award, notification of school divisions will be made through Superintendents' Memorandum and posting on the Department of Education Web site.

Leadership in Cultural Diversity Education Award

Increasingly, Virginia public schools are more diverse, and this trend will continue to grow. The ultimate focus is not about diversity itself, but more about the impact differences have on how students achieve in school. To have a successful culturally pluralistic school community, it is important to promote understanding of the values and beliefs endemic to various cultures.

During the 2003-04 school year, the Student Advisory Committee of the Board of Education recommended to the board that an award program be developed for schools that make an effort to educate students about cultural diversity. Understanding cultural diversity is fundamental to the processes, content, and outcomes of schooling. Subsequently, learning how to interact in a culturally diverse society should start in school.

The Virginia State Board of Education has established a Leadership in Cultural Diversity Education Award for schools and school divisions. Throughout the year, recipients will be presented with a certificate of recognition at Board of Education meetings. The programs that received recognition for promoting an understanding and responsiveness to cultural diversity in Virginia schools will be highlighted on the Web site of the Virginia Department of Education.

Criteria for Selection

- Continuous development of strategies that encourage success for all students
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- Ongoing activities that eliminate prejudice
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How to Nominate

Nominations will be accepted throughout the year. The selection committee, to include representatives from school divisions, the Virginia Department of Education, and a nationally recognized cultural competency trainer/consultant, will meet quarterly to select an award recipient.

Nominations should include:

- Information about the number of students and school(s) affected as well as demographics of the school(s) and the student population
- A description of the program or strategy implemented
- A description of how the program or strategy promotes an understanding of cultural diversity within the school community or promotes a school climate that is culturally responsive to all students
- Contact information for the nominator, including mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address
- A description of outcomes such as data documenting results, letters of support, publications, and newspaper coverage