

# Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: J.

Date: March 28, 2007

Topic: First Review of the Proposed Board of Education's *Spirit of the Commonwealth Award*

Presenter: Dr. Cynthia A. Cave, Director, Office of Student Services

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## Origin:

Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

Board review required by

State or federal law or regulation

Board of Education regulation

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Action requested at this meeting  Action requested at future meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

## Previous Review/Action:

No previous board review/action

Previous review/action

date April 26, 2006

action Recommendation to the Board of Education by the Student Advisory Committee

## Background Information:

On April 26, 2006, the Board of Education's 2005-2006 Student Advisory Committee presented a recommendation to the Board to create the *Spirit of the Commonwealth Award*. This award would be created and given annually to individual high school juniors who have demonstrated academic achievement, well-rounded participation in school activities, and community and civic responsibility. Individual middle/junior and high schools would also be able to receive an award by providing diverse opportunities for students to serve the community and others in co-curricular and/or extracurricular activities, such as service learning and volunteering experiences.

## Summary of Major Elements:

To implement the award, the following criteria and procedures are proposed.

### The Individual Student Awards

In order to be eligible for an individual award, a student must be nominated by a school division principal, teacher, guidance counselor, or a parent. Nominations should be based on academic

achievement, participation in a variety of service and community/civic activities, leadership, and good character.

Nominated high school juniors would complete an application and submit it with letters of recommendation to their respective principals. Each public high school principal, with the assistance of a school team, would review all applications and select the most qualified applicants in their respective schools. The names of the selected applicants would be forwarded to the school division for review and submission to the Virginia Department of Education. Award recipients would receive letters and certificates of recognition from the Board of Education.

### The Middle and High School Awards

In order to be eligible for an award, a school would be nominated by a principal, teacher, or parents. Nominated schools would have demonstrated success by:

- Provision of diverse opportunities for students to participate in service activities in the school and community
- Recognition of demonstrated student leadership in a variety of areas

Principals of the nominated schools would submit applications to their respective school division administrators for review by a division team. The division team would select the most qualified middle/junior high schools and the most qualified high school recipients. Names of schools would be forwarded to the Department of Education. Award recipients would receive letters and certificates of recognition from the Board of Education.

### **Superintendent's Recommendation:**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education accept for first review the proposed criteria and process for the *Spirit of the Commonwealth Award*.

### **Impact on Resources:**

The impact on resources is not expected to be significant. There will be some administrative costs to school divisions in preparation and review of applications for the award.

### **Timetable for Further Review/Action:**

Upon final approval, information will be provided to school divisions and to principals about award criteria and procedures.

## ***VIRGINIA SPIRIT OF THE COMMONWEALTH***

**Purpose:** Students across Virginia are using their talents and ambition to make a difference in their schools, neighborhoods and communities. On April 26, 2006, the Board of Education's 2005-2006 Student Advisory Committee acknowledged the importance of promoting student involvement by recommending that the **Spirit of the Commonwealth Award** be developed. The award recognizes:

- Student leadership in the school and community
- Student involvement in clubs, sports, societies, and service organizations
- Academic achievement
- Civic involvement through service to others and volunteerism

The award is also designed for school divisions and parents to recognize middle/junior and high schools that make diverse opportunities available for students in the award areas. These middle/junior and high schools collaborate with community organizations to promote student leadership, involvement, service and civic responsibility.

**Process:** To be eligible, a student must be nominated by a principal, teacher, guidance counselor or parent. Nominated students must submit an application and at least two letters of recommendation to their respective school principals. Each division high school principal, with the assistance of a school team, reviews all applications and selects the most qualified applicants in their respective schools. The names of the selected applicants are forwarded to the school division administrator for review and submission to the Virginia Department of Education.

Middle/junior and high schools nominated by principals, teachers or parents will also be required to complete and submit applications. Principals of the nominated schools would submit their applications to their respective division administrators for review. The school division administrator, with the assistance of a division-level team, is responsible for selecting the most qualified middle, junior and high schools for recognition. The school division forwards the selected award recipient school names to the Virginia Department of Education.

The Department of Education (VDOE) will provide school divisions with a certificate of recognition and a letter of congratulations from the Board of Education for each award recipient. The completed certificates will be sent to school division administrators for presentation to the recipients.

If you have questions or need additional information about the Spirit of the Commonwealth Award, please contact Vivian.Stith-Williams, student services specialist at 804-225-4543 or email, [Vivian.Stith-Williams@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Vivian.Stith-Williams@doe.virginia.gov).

Attachments

**VIRGINIA SPIRIT OF THE COMMONWEALTH  
AWARD APPLICATION**

**SECTION I**

*(To be completed by student and given to the school principal)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Last                                      First                                      Middle                                      Date of Birth

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ (    ) \_\_\_\_\_  
  Number and Street                                      Phone

City/County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

High School Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ School Fax \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
  Number and Street

\_\_\_\_\_ City/County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Note: A legible transcript of your high school work MUST accompany this application.

Nominating person: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_



**VIRGINIA SPIRIT OF THE COMMONWEALTH  
SCHOOL AWARD APPLICATION**

**SECTION I**

*(To be completed by school principal and submitted to division administrator)*

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School Division \_\_\_\_\_

This is a

Middle/Junior high school: Number of students: \_\_\_\_\_

High school: Number of students: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Number and Street

Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
City/County

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code

Nominating person: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION II**

*(To be completed by school principal)*

**Please respond to the question below on a separate sheet of paper.**

Describe the opportunities offered to students in the areas of co-curricular and/or extracurricular activities, athletics, societies/clubs, service organizations, recognitions (e.g., scholarships, honors, and awards), service learning and community volunteering experiences. What community partnerships and collaborations (e.g., PTA, non-profit organizations, and businesses) have you enhanced, developed or supported to make these opportunities available? If appropriate, provide the number of students that participate in each activity/program for the past two years.

**THANK YOU!**