



For Immediate Release: June 6, 2011

Contact: Charles B. Pyle, Director of Communications, (804) 371-2420
Julie C. Grimes, Communications Manager, (804) 225-2775

State Superintendent Approves 13 Virtual-School Programs *Online Schools May Offer Instruction to Students in Multiple School Divisions*

Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright has approved 13 virtual-school programs to provide instruction to students in multiple school divisions as part of Governor Bob McDonnell's effort to expand access to online learning while ensuring quality and alignment with state academic standards.

The virtual schools will offer instruction aligned with the commonwealth's Standards of Learning (SOL) and delivered by teachers fully licensed by the Virginia Board of Education. The approved "multidivision online providers" include full-time virtual schools, programs offering supplemental instruction, and blended-instruction programs in which students have a trained, on-site mentor in addition to an online teacher.

"No Virginia child's future should be limited by the walls of a particular school building or the boundaries of an attendance zone," McDonnell said. "Virtual schools create additional choices and opportunities within our public education system."

"School divisions now can broaden the array of courses they offer — and reach out to more non-traditional students — by contracting with virtual schools or online providers that meet criteria and standards set by the Board of Education," Wright said.

Each of the approved virtual school programs is accredited by a national or regional agency recognized by the state board. The approved providers are:

- Apex Learning — full-time, supplemental and blended instruction for students in grades 9-12 including Advanced Placement (AP) courses; accredited by Northwest Accreditation Commission
- Brigham Young University Independent Study — full-time, supplemental and blended instruction for students in grades 7-12 including AP courses; accredited by Northwest Accreditation Commission
- Chesterfield County Public Schools — supplemental instruction for students in grades 9-12; accredited by Virginia Board of Education
- CompuHigh — full-time and supplemental instruction for students in grades 8-12; accredited by AdvanceEd
- Connections Academy — full-time, supplemental and blended instruction for students in grades K-12 including AP courses; accredited by AdvanceEd
- Edison Learning — full-time, supplemental and blended instruction for students in grades 9-12; accredited by Northwest Accreditation Commission and Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- EdOptions Online Academy — full-time, supplemental and blended instruction for students in grades 6-12; accredited by AdvanceEd
- Education2020 — full-time, supplemental and blended instruction for students in grades 6-12 including AP courses; accredited by Northwest Accreditation Commission

(more)

- Florida Virtual School — full-time and supplemental instruction for students in grades 6-12 including AP courses; accredited by AdvanceEd
- Giant Campus of Virginia — supplemental instruction for students in grades 9-12; accredited by Northwest Accreditation Commission
- K-12 Virtual Schools — full-time, supplemental and blended instruction for students in grades K-12 including AP courses; accredited by AdvanceEd
- Virtual High School Global Consortium — supplemental instruction for students in grades 9-12, including AP courses; accredited by Northwest Accreditation Commission and Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- York County Public Schools — full-time and supplemental instruction for students in grades 7-12

Information about each of the approved providers — including programs and SOL-aligned courses offered — is available on the Virginia Department of Education website.

In approving McDonnell's "Opportunity to Learn" education reform agenda, the 2010 General Assembly created a new framework for virtual schools and online instruction designed to expand options for students while ensuring quality and alignment with the SOL.

The 2010 legislation allows school divisions to offer online instruction to students in multiple school divisions by entering into contracts with private organizations, educational institutions or nonprofit virtual-school organizations that meet Board of Education criteria and have been approved by the superintendent of public instruction to operate as multidivision online providers.

The legislation requires local school divisions to post on their websites by July 1, 2011, information about the online courses and programs they offer — including when the division will pay course fees and other costs for nonresident students and the granting of high school credit.

A virtual schools or online program enrolling fewer than 10 percent of its students from outside the sponsoring school division or consortia of divisions is not required to secure approval as a multidivision online provider.

###