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Virginia Department of Education to Pilot Virtual Virginia Full-Time High School

The Virginia Department of Education's Virtual Virginia program will pilot a full-time, online high school for the 2015-2016 school year. The pilot — available to as many as 100 students on a first-come, first-served basis — will offer all required core academic courses and electives necessary to earn a Standard or Advanced Studies diploma.

"We are excited to offer this opportunity to high school students, especially those with the potential for thriving in a non-traditional instructional setting," Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples said. "This expansion of the nationally recognized Virtual Virginia program provides more choice and flexibility to students seeking a high school diploma."

Students in the full-time pilot will be enrolled in their local public school but will receive instruction through Virtual Virginia. As with all Virtual Virginia courses, instruction will be provided by teachers with Virginia certification. Local schools will ensure that students in the pilot have access to technology, textbooks, special services and other necessary materials at no cost.

"Virtual Virginia has a track record of providing rigorous online instructional alternatives to students in the commonwealth," Chief Academic Officer/Assistant Superintendent for Instruction John W. Haun said. "That will continue with the addition of 14 courses covering everything a student would need to earn a diploma through Virtual Virginia."

Courses are delivered through Virtual Virginia's secure, web-based environment, and, like traditional classroom instruction, will include readings, discussion forums, written assignments, media, student presentations and projects, case studies, simulations, lab assignments, models and opportunities for student collaboration.

Local schools will award letter grades and credit for courses completed based on percentage grades — provided by Virtual Virginia instructors — that reflect coursework done in the online program.

Students will be required to register for Virtual Virginia through their local school and have approval of their parents and school administration. The students will matriculate through their local school and will receive credit toward graduation requirements — including Standards of Learning assessments — and upon completion will be awarded a diploma by their local school.

Students interested in participating in the pilot must register through their local public school counselor.

Virtual Virginia will continue to offer more than 54 Advanced Placement (AP), academic electives and world language courses to students who may not have access to these courses within their schools due to low enrollments, scheduling conflicts or lack of highly qualified teachers.

Since 2002, Virtual Virginia has provided access to high quality and rigorous courses to more than 40,000 students.

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