



#040-21

Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #040-21

DATE: February 12, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Parent Ombudsman for Special Education**

In response to the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission's (JLARC's) December 2020 study [K-12 Special Education in Virginia](#), the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has developed a one page, easy-to-understand, comprehensive summary of the role and responsibilities of the Parent Ombudsman for Special Education that addresses the specific supports the Parent Ombudsman can provide to parents. As noted in the our [Ombudsman for Special Education](#) (PDF) one page resource, an Ombudsman is a person who serves as a designated neutral party who advocates for a fair process and provides confidential, informal assistance and support to parents, guardians, advocates, educators, and students with disabilities. The Parent Ombudsman for Special Education serves as a resource to parents in non-legal special education matters. To increase the visibility of the information related to the Ombudsman, the VDOE has created a separate [Parent Ombudsman for Special Education](#) webpage for posting of information about the Ombudsman's services and resources for parents developed by the Ombudsman. The VDOE has also placed the Ombudsman's information on three prominent parent information portals; the [Special Education, Information for Parents](#), and [Resolving Disputes](#) webpages.

Additionally, the VDOE has realigned our [organizational chart](#) to reflect the position of Parent Ombudsman for Special Education as reporting to the VDOE leadership at the Cabinet level. The VDOE has also redesigned the Ombudsman's contact tracking log to allow for more systematic tracking of the questions or concerns raised by constituents and now requires the Parent Ombudsman to report, on a quarterly basis, the common questions or systemic

concerns to the VDOE Deputy Superintendent and Chief of Staff and the Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services.

For more information

Questions regarding the Parent Ombudsman for Special Education may be directed to the Ombudsman, Gloria Dalton, via telephone, at (804) 371-7420 or (800) 422-2083, or via email, at Gloria.Dalton@doe.virginia.gov.

- Resource: [Ombudsman for Special Education](#) (PDF)