



#061-21

Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #061-21

DATE: March 12, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Announcing the 2021 Mary Peake Award for Excellence in Education Equity**

The Virginia Department of Education is pleased to announce the launch of the 2nd Annual Mary Peake Award for Excellence in Education Equity. This statewide award will recognize individuals and organizations making significant contributions to the advancement of educational equity. Nominations for The Mary Peake Award for Excellence in Education Equity are now being accepted. Please consider nominating an educator, policy maker, school leader, or group whose service and leadership is impacting equity outcomes in the state.

Named after one of Virginia's first education equity pioneers, these awards recognize Mrs. Peake's contribution to equity and her continued inspiration to the field. Peake is known for educating both enslaved and free Black people in the mid-1800s, a time when such an act was illegal. Her fortitude to educate her people, particularly during a time when it was forbidden, demonstrates an understanding of the value of education and a commitment to serving those intentionally marginalized. Mary Peake's work is a true testament to the ongoing journey towards education equity in the Commonwealth.

All nomination materials for the 2nd annual Mary Peake Award must be submitted online by May 14, 2021 by 5:00 PM EST. Winners of the Mary Peake Award for Excellence in Education Equity will be honored virtually at the annual VDOE Summer Education Equity Conference on June 17, 2021. For more information about the nomination process and selection criteria, visit the [Virginia is for Learners website](#). You may also [access the nomination form directly](#).

Nominations will be accepted in the following categories:

- **Educator** (Teacher, Paraprofessional, Support Staff, Specialist, Professor or Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Staff, etc.)
- **Policy Maker** (General Assembly Member, School Board Member, Elected Official)
- **School Leader** (Principal, Vice-principal, Superintendent, Central Office Staff, etc.)
- **Organization/Stakeholder Group/School or Division Team** (e.g. Grade Level Team, Professional Learning Community (PLC), Educational Support Organization, Out of School Time Provider, Advocacy Organization, etc.)

The Virginia Department of Education's equity framework, [Navigating EdEquityVA](#), outlines our commitment to eliminating the predictability of student outcomes based on race, gender, zip code, ability, socio-economic status and/or languages spoken at home. Every day, all across the Commonwealth, countless individuals and organizations work tirelessly in various capacities to help achieve this goal. The Mary Peake Award for Excellence in Education Equity recognizes those efforts and we welcome the public to submit nominations.

For more information

If you have any further questions, or otherwise require assistance, please contact the Office of Equity and Community Engagement at the Virginia Department of Education at EdEquityVA@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/LDW/jvn