



#074-21

**Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #074-21**

DATE: March 19, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **School Divisions of Innovation - Application for Division Designation 2021**

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is pleased to announce the 2021 School Divisions of Innovation Application for Division Designation. The 2017 Virginia General Assembly approved House Bill 1981 (Greason), directing the Virginia Board of Education (Board) to develop regulations for the designation of School Divisions of Innovation (SDI). To be eligible for designation, a local school board would submit a plan of innovation according to Board criteria as presented in the regulations. Per this directive, the Board initiated the regulatory review process beginning on September 28, 2017. The proposed regulations went through a two-year regulatory process and the Regulations Governing the Designation of School Divisions of Innovation [8VAC20-760-20. School Division of Innovation designation](#) went into effect on September 19, 2019.

Attachment A contains the Application for 2021 School Divisions of Innovation Designation. The application and selection timeline are as follows:

- Intent to Submit - March 29, 2021
- Pre-application Meeting (webinar) - April 2, 2021
- Application due - May 3, 2021
- Recommendation to the Board for Approval - July 22, 2021

School divisions are encouraged to apply for this unique designation as a School Division of Innovation (SDI). Pursuant to an approved plan of innovation, a SDI shall be exempted from

selected regulatory provisions and permitted to adopt alternative policies for school administrators, teachers, and staff to meet the diverse needs of students. SDI designated divisions will receive a designation logo to be used on any marketing or communication messaging. It is anticipated that the Board of Education will receive recommendations for SDI approval at the **July 22, 2021** Board Meeting. Designated school divisions will be included in a VDOE Press Release and be highlighted on the VDOE and Virginia is for Learners websites.

For more information

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Brendon Albon, Director of STEM and Innovation, at instruction@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/BLA/pf

- A. Attachment: [2021 School Divisions of Innovation Application for Division Designation](#)
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