



Virginia Department of Education in partnership with the  
Center on Transition Innovations at Virginia Commonwealth University

## Statewide Transition Leadership Academy (STLA) Application Cohort III: 2026-27

### Instructions

All candidates must submit their applications through their school division's director of special education. Only one candidate per school division will be considered for participation in this cohort. If your school division sent a participant to Cohort I or Cohort II, you are not eligible to apply at this time.

A completed application packet includes Applicant Information, Applicant Signed Knowledge and Academy Statement, Supervisor and Superintendent's Signed Expectations for Academy Participation Statement, Resume, and one letter of recommendation. Incomplete packets will not be accepted or considered.

Submit completed application packets to the address below with a postmark date of April 17, 2026, or by email at [WillisK5@vcu.edu](mailto:WillisK5@vcu.edu) by April 17, 2026.

Katie Willis, Senior Administrative Assistant  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
Center on Transition Innovations  
1314 West Main Street, PO Box 842011  
Richmond, Virginia 23284-2011

For more information, contact Kendel St. John, STLA Project Lead, at [kstjohn@vcu.edu](mailto:kstjohn@vcu.edu).

### Part 1: Applicant Information

Full Name:

School Division (if applicable):

Home Address:

School/Work Name and Full Address:

Work Email:

Current Position:

Telephone:

Years in Current Position:

Years of Educational Experience:

Supervisor's Name:

Highest Degree Earned:

Supervisor's Title:

License Type (select the appropriate checkbox below):

- Collegiate Professional
- Postgraduate Professional
- Provisional

Supervisor's Email:

License Expiration Date:

Supervisor's Telephone:

## Part II: Applicant's Knowledge, Academy Statement, Resume, and Recommendation Letter

In applying for the Statewide Transition Leaders Academy, you are expressing interest in increasing your knowledge, leadership potential, and experience in providing transition services to students and families.

Rate your current knowledge of transition planning by selecting the appropriate checkbox below.

- Advanced: In-depth knowledge and application of transition planning and services
- Proficient: Broad working knowledge of transition planning and services
- Developing: Some understanding of transition planning and services
- Novice: Minimal awareness of transition planning and services

Develop a statement (500 words or less) describing your professional goals and what you hope to accomplish through this experience. Discuss your philosophy of transition planning and explain how your participation will benefit transition stakeholders. Additionally, describe how you plan to build knowledge and skills within your school division to improve postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities.

**Resume:** Attach a current resume (three pages or less) listing formal education including degree(s) earned; work experience(s) related to special education, secondary transition, and administration; professional and civic activities; and other pertinent information.

**Recommendation Letter:** Attach one letter of recommendation from your supervisor. The letter should highlight your qualifications with particular emphasis on your communication skills and leadership potential.

## Part III: Signed Expectations for Academy Participation

The following expectations must be agreed to by the Statewide Transition Leaders Academy participant and their school division superintendent or designee. Check each box and sign on the appropriate line before uploading or submitting your application. If applying electronically, please provide a digitally certified Adobe signature. If applying by mail, please provide a wet ink signature.

### Expectations of Academy Participants

Please read each statement and check each box to indicate agreement.

- I will attend, engage, reflect, and work collaboratively with others in all scheduled sessions.
- I will contribute to the professional culture of the STLA cohort by the following actions:
  - engaging in collaboration
  - demonstrating respect for other participants
  - assuming the positive intent of others
  - being open-minded to new learning experiences
  - preparing for each session by completing reading and other assignments
  - responding to colleagues in a timely manner
  - supporting colleagues in learning and creating
- I will engage fully in sessions offered and will set boundaries to assist with minimizing disruptions (e.g., answering emails and phone calls) and maximizing learning.
- I will be reflective throughout the phases of the STLA, thinking about the outcomes of students, families, classrooms, teachers, and schools.
- I will complete all work with an intentional focus on student-centered transition, encompassing student achievement, growth, and the development of personal competencies.
- I will maintain professional communication with program staff, particularly regarding any extenuating circumstances that may arise.
- I will document my STLA growth journey and will demonstrate progress toward desired individual, school, teacher, and student outcomes.
- I will share my successful STLA growth journey with other leaders to encourage statewide expansion of learning and leadership development.

Name of Applicant:

Signature of Applicant:

Date:

## Expectations of School Division Administrator in Support of the Academy Applicant

Please read each statement and check each box to indicate agreement.

- I will excuse the applicant from regular duties to attend required STLA events and have negotiated release time to participate with minimal interruptions.
- I understand that attendance at all sessions is mandatory.
- I will provide financial support for expenses not covered by STLA for the applicant to attend events, such as mileage reimbursement.
- I will support the applicant in applying evidence-based strategies that align with the vision for student-focused transition within their school division.
- I consent to the participants' access to and use of Indicator 14 Frequency Reports.
- I agree to provide progress data as requested by VDOE/CTI for up to four years to support growth and sustainability efforts at the division level and of STLA programming.
- I have not had a member of our school division participate in STLA in a previous cohort.

Name of  
Superintendent or  
Designee:

Signature of  
Superintendent or  
Designee:

Date:

## Part IV: Signed Recommendations and Approvals

The school division superintendent or designee and the director of special education endorse this applicant's nomination for the Statewide Transition Leaders Academy. If the applicant is selected for participation, the school division agrees to provide the participant's mileage reimbursement and professional leave.

Name of  
Superintendent or  
Designee:

Superintendent's or  
Designee's Email:

Signature of  
Superintendent or  
Designee:

Date:

Name of Director of  
Special Education:

Director of Special  
Education's Email:

Signature of  
Director of Special  
Education:

Date:

**Submit the completed application packet by mail or email by April 17, 2026.**