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## **Virginia Department of Education Announces New Transition Center for Students with Disabilities**

***Center Established through Collaboration with Virginia Commonwealth University***

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) today announced the establishment of the Center on Transition Innovations (CTI). The new center is a collaborative venture of VDOE and the VCU School of Education's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC). It will serve as a statewide resource to support school divisions, service providers, students with disabilities and their families as they work together to facilitate successful transitions for students with disabilities after they leave school.

CTI, which was funded through a \$2 million VDOE special education and student services start-up grant, will assist stakeholders in identifying career goals, encouraging skill building so individuals can live as independently as possible in their communities and increasing inclusive postsecondary competitive employment, education, and training opportunities.

"The Center on Transition Innovations will build upon the success of existing programs for transition-age students," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright. "Its success will be measured in the independence and sense of fulfillment students with disabilities achieve after graduating from high school."

Named to lead CTI are Paul Wehman as principal investigator and Elizabeth Getzel as director. Both are employed by VCU and will work with VDOE and other state agencies.

"Youth with disabilities are an incredible source of potential labor for businesses in the commonwealth, many with greatly untapped potential," said Wehman, who directs the RRTC.

"With the new Center on Transition Innovations, we will be working closely with school districts, vocational rehabilitation, higher education and businesses to develop innovative ways to include these young people in the labor force."

Through its website, CTI will provide information on available resources including online courses, webcasts, videos, newsletters, fact sheets and topical papers. CTI will also be involved in transition-related research and transition program development.

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