

PRESS RELEASE



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VIRGINIA LEARNS ANNOUNCES NEW PILOT FOR HIGH-IMPACT TUTORING PROGRAM ACCELERATE VIRGINIA

The pilot will involve 50 middle school students from Cumberland County Public Schools, who will receive tutoring in literacy and math with qualified tutor volunteers.

RICHMOND, VA - Virginia Learns has announced a pilot for its new, high-impact tutoring program *Accelerate Virginia*. Funded by federal CARES Act ESSR allocations, the pilot will involve 50 middle school students from Cumberland County Public Schools, who will receive tutoring in literacy and math with qualified tutor volunteers. Tutors and students will have access to an all-in-one tutoring platform provided by Pearl, a Richmond-based ed-tech software company. The pilot will begin in October.

“School closures and interruptions over the past two years have only exacerbated issues with learning progress for students across Virginia. *Accelerate Virginia* is a commonsense, community-focused effort that empowers students and volunteers alike. We are thrilled to partner with Cumberland County Public Schools for this initial pilot phase, and we look forward to expanding this program in the future to reach more school divisions across the Commonwealth,” said **Robert Nomberg, president and CEO of Virginia Learns**.

“Cumberland County Public Schools is always ready to embrace innovative learning solutions that benefit our students, and we are excited to be the first to partner with Virginia Learns in this new program. Numerous studies show that student comprehension dramatically improves with one-on-one and small-group tutoring. We look forward to showcasing how *Accelerate Virginia* can be a Commonwealth-wide solution to learning recovery,” said **Chip Jones, Superintendent of Cumberland County Public Schools**.

“As a Richmond, Virginia-based company, Pearl is eager to support the work of a pilot program that is located so close to home. Our platform was built by tutors for tutors, and we are confident that our tools will support the work of *Accelerate Virginia* and help this state-wide program achieve sustainability,” said **John Failla, Founder and CEO of Pearl**.

The *Accelerate Virginia* pilot will involve at least 25 highly committed volunteer tutors who will work with the participating middle school students who need additional assistance in literacy and math. Tutors will also serve as mentors and foster lasting connections with the students involved. Prior to the launch of the pilot, Virginia Learns will recruit and train volunteer tutors to use a high-impact, research-based tutoring model that will ensure each student is known, supported, and academically on track. Virginia Learns will also coordinate with Cumberland County school division staff to match volunteers with the participating students.

Virginia Learns is actively recruiting tutor volunteers to participate in this initial phase, with a specific focus on college students who may pursue a future career in public education. Through *Accelerate Virginia*, tutor volunteers will gain unique insight into the teaching profession and gain skillsets that will prepare them for a future in education.

“Virginia is not unique to the teacher shortage our country is facing. We need more individuals entering the education field, and *Accelerate Virginia* will serve as a means of supporting the teacher pipeline,” said **Robert Nomberg**.

If you or someone you know is interested in participating in this volunteer pilot program, please visit virginialearns.org/acceleratevirginia to apply as a volunteer tutor today.

About Virginia Learns

Virginia Learns is a nonpartisan nonprofit and statewide education operating foundation. Through aligned leadership, we inform and influence local and state decision makers; amplify the voices of those most impacted by education policy decisions; and advance state and local partnerships that bring needed change and positive results. Virginia Learns is the only business group whose sole mission is to strengthen education. We accomplish this goal by creating a trusting and collaborative relationship with businesses, educators, and policymakers so we can create the workforce Virginia needs and set students up for success in school, work, and life. VirginiaLearns.org

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