

November 29, 2010

Dear Education Workgroup Members, Advocates, and Supportive Stakeholders,

During a season when we take time to reflect on the people, gifts, and organizations we revere and appreciate, our thoughts are focused on you. On behalf of our respective agencies and ourselves we extend a heartfelt thank you! It was just over a year ago when advocates, educators, social workers, foster parents, and stakeholders interested in the educational needs and outcomes of youth in foster care and older adopted youth convened around a primary objective of the *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*--promoting educational stability. First we decided that it might be helpful to consider the immediate challenges regarding the implementation of the Act in Virginia, as well as effective tools and strategies to swiftly address those challenges. We then decided to establish a multi-jurisdictional workgroup that might serve as a vehicle to consider programs, positions, policies, and promising practices pursuant to the educational needs of foster care youth and older adopted youth. You were identified as an expert in your field whose input would facilitate and support enhanced educational outcomes for these youth.

The rest is history. As a result of your hard work, steadfast vision, unwavering commitment, and creativity, tools have been developed to facilitate this objective. The tools include (a) The Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Department of Social Services Joint Guidance on Best Interest Determination for School Placement, (b) the Best Interest Determination for School Placement Form, and (c) the Immediate Enrollment of Child in Foster Care Form.

On **Tuesday, December 14, 2010**, an **information webinar** will take place to introduce the tools to your colleagues--social workers, school personnel, advocates, parents, and private agencies. We invite you to register for this webinar by typing **VDSS.webex.com** into your browser and pressing enter. Click the tab that says upcoming (near the top of page but under *Live Sessions*). Then click register (on the right hand side of the page) beside the session you wish to attend. You will then be asked to enter your first name, last name, and email address. Click register and you are done

Please join us on Tuesday, December 14, at either 10:00-11:15 am or 1:00-2:15 pm. If you have questions feel free to contact Peyton at [peyton.mccoy@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:peyton.mccoy@dss.virginia.gov) or phone 804 726 7944. Again, thank you for all that you have done and continue to do. Please share the news of your work with your colleagues and invite them to register and join us.

Sincerely,

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