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## **IDRA EAC-South Assists Virginia Commission on African American History Education in the Commonwealth**

**The commission will update Virginia's standards of learning to be more inclusive of African American contributions**



**Charlottesville, October 28, 2019** - More than 30 members of the new [Virginia Commission on African American History Education in the Commonwealth](#) were sworn in today. For the next eight months, commissioners will review the

commonwealth's history standards, instructional practices, content, and resources currently used to teach history and will make recommendations on the professional development supports needed to equip all teachers for culturally-relevant pedagogy.



The governor's office asked the [IDRA EAC-South](#) to assist the commission's work sessions and report creation between now and July 2020, when the commission's recommendations will be submitted to Virginia Governor Ralph Northam. Operated by the Intercultural Development Research Association, the IDRA EAC-South is the federally-funded equity assistance center serving schools in the U.S. South to protect students' civil rights to ensure full inclusion and participation by all students and their parents regardless of race, sex, national origin or religion.

"At our core, we know that every young person is valuable, but we must do more to ensure all students see themselves and their heritage in our history books because all students need the opportunity to think critically about how our history is relevant to our communities today," said [Celina Moreno, J.D., IDRA President & CEO](#). "It is particularly meaningful for the commission to begin its work today in Charlottesville, Virginia, the site of the tragic 2017 attack by a White supremacist and not far from Hampton, Virginia, where the first enslaved Africans arrived 400 years ago in what is now the United States."



l-r: Celina Moreno, J.D., IDRA President & CEO; Atif Qarni, Virginia Secretary of Education; Holly Coy, Virginia Deputy Secretary of Education for Governor Northam; Dr. Paula Johnson, director of the IDRA EAC-South; Dr. Derrick Alridge, University of Virginia Center on Race and Public Education in the South and co-chair of the commission; Morgan Craven, J.D., IDRA National Director of Policy & Community Engagement; Michelle Vega, IDRA Chief Technology Strategist.

In a statement announcing the commission's creation, **Governor Northam** stated: "The full history of Virginia is complex, contradictory, and often untold - and we must do a better job of making sure that every Virginia graduate enters adult life with an accurate and thorough understanding of our past, and the pivotal role that African Americans have played in building and perfecting our Commonwealth. The important work of this commission will help ensure that Virginia's standards of learning are inclusive of African American history and allow students to engage deeply, drawing connections between historic racial inequities and their continuous influence on our communities today."

"The IDRA EAC-South is honored to facilitate this

historic commission," said [Dr. Paula Johnson, director of the IDRA EAC-South](#). "Virginia is embarking on a courageous and powerful initiative that will ensure that students in the Commonwealth will understand that African American history is U.S. history. Understanding that history is critical to being engaged citizens in our world today."



The commission will hold five meeting sessions that will include opportunities for public comment.

See: [List of the commission members and meeting dates is online with the governor's executive order.](#)

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We are committed to the IDRA valuing philosophy, respecting the knowledge and skills of the individuals we work with and build on the strengths of the students and parents in their schools.