



Summer Residential Governor's Schools

AGRICULTURE

Student Application
2026-2027

Section 1: Applicant Information

Provide your contact details below. Use a personal email address only. This is the email that will be used to notify you of your application status

First Name: _____ Personal Email (*not school issued*): _____
Middle Initial: _____ Graduation Year: _____
Last Name: _____
Phone Number: _____ Parent/Guardian Contacts (phone and email)
Street Address: _____
City: _____ Contact 1: _____
Zip: _____ Contact 2: _____

Section 2: School Information

All students must provide the full school information (no acronyms or abbreviations). Public school students must provide the school division name. Private school regional coordinators will enter the correct region number.

School Name: _____
School Phone Number: _____
School Contact Full Name: _____
School Contact Email: _____
Division (public schools only): _____
Region Number (private schools only): _____ ← Completed by regional coordinator

Section 3: Recommendations

All applicants must request two recommendations; one must be from a teacher; the second may be from another teacher or any adult who knows your strengths. Recommendation forms are available on the VDOE Summer Residential Governor's Schools website. Provide the names and email addresses of the two individuals you will ask to submit recommendations on your behalf.

	Name	Email
Recommendation A (Teacher-only):	_____	_____
Recommendation B (Teacher or Adult):	_____	_____

Section 4: Resume (Activities, Research, & Honors)

List accomplishments from both in-school and out-of-school activities. Highlight leadership roles (extracurricular/community groups, national organizations) and intellectual pursuits (research, presentations, competitions). Examples are provided

Activities & Programs

List up to 3 impactful activities or programs you participated in during the past three years, related to your interest area. Be sure to include the activity or organization, position held, time involved, and year(s).

Example: Student Government, Secretary, 2 hrs./month, 2019-2020

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Research and Experiences

List up to 3 impactful research or study experiences completed over the past three years related to your area of interest. Be sure to include the research or study area, teacher/mentor, organization, & year(s)

Example: Independent Research/Study, Terry Lewis, Macon Public Library, 2018-2019

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Honors & Recognitions

List up to 3 significant honors or recognitions received in the past three years related to your area of interest. Be sure to include the honor or recognition, scope of event (local, regional, state...), and year(s).

Example: National Honor Society, National, 2022

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Section 5: Essays

Respond to both Essay A & Essay B. Carefully review the rubric provided which will be used to evaluate your submission (max score=6). Consider each of the areas as you proofread & edit.

Composition (0 – 4 points)

Criteria	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
Central Idea (Position)	Strong	Weak	Unclear	Missing
Evidence (Details)	Precise/Relevant	Adequate	Minimal	Unclear
Organization (Unity)	Logical/Unified	Some digressions	Many digressions	Lacking
Word Choice	Highly Specific	Some Specificity	Limited	Lacking

Mechanics (0 – 2 points)

Criteria	2 points	1 point	0 points
Sentence Structure	Varied	Some variety	Weak
Usage	Consistently correct	Some incorrect	Incorrect
Mechanics	Consistently correct	Some incorrect	Incorrect

Essay A: Respond to the prompt below in 250 words or less.

Prompt: Reflect on a significant experience, idea, or aspect of your background that has inspired your intellectual curiosity &/or personal growth, especially in relation to your chosen program area.

Discuss:

- How has this influenced your perspective on learning & the subject?
- How do you hope to explore & develop these interests further?
- How would the Governor's School support you, & what will you contribute to the community?

Essay B: Respond to one of the prompts below in 500 words or less with sources cited at the end.

Choice 1: Drought and Agricultural Resilience Climate change is affecting agricultural production through changing rainfall patterns, drought, extreme heat, and other weather-related challenges. In 2026, persistent drought placed significant pressure on Virginia agriculture, particularly livestock producers. On September 16, 2026, the Governor of Virginia declared a state of emergency in response to a statewide hay shortage of approximately 500,000 tons. Virginia Cooperative Extension estimated that drought contributed to a 35% loss in hay yields statewide, with losses reaching as high as 70% in some areas. Poor pasture conditions also forced many livestock producers to begin feeding stored hay earlier than usual, further reducing supplies needed for winter. Emergency measures can help farmers respond to an immediate crisis, but long-term agricultural resilience requires preparation for future droughts. Potential strategies include improving soil and pasture management, adopting drought-tolerant forage and crop varieties, expanding water storage and irrigation systems, using precision agriculture technologies, diversifying farm operations, developing regional feed reserves, and providing financial or technical assistance to producers. In your essay, argue which strategies should be prioritized to help Virginia farmers prepare for and adapt to future droughts while maintaining sustainable agricultural production. Consider the potential benefits, limitations, and tradeoffs of the approaches you

propose. Use credible evidence from scientific research, economic information, expert sources, and/or real-world examples to support your argument. Address at least one competing approach or perspective and explain why your proposed strategy or combination of strategies offers an effective and balanced response. Generative AI should not be used at any step in your research, outlining, or writing process.

Choice 2: Precision Agriculture and the Agricultural Workforce Agriculture is rapidly changing with the adoption of precision agriculture technologies such as GPS-guided equipment, drones, sensors, robotics, and data analytics. These technologies can help farmers use resources more efficiently, increase productivity, reduce environmental impacts, and make more informed management decisions. At the same time, technological change is altering agricultural jobs. Some tasks traditionally performed by farmworkers can now be automated, while new technologies can create demand for workers with skills in areas such as equipment operation, data analysis, electronics, and information technology. As farms adopt increasingly advanced technologies, producers and agricultural communities must consider how to balance technological innovation with the needs of the agricultural workforce. In your essay, argue which strategies should be prioritized to help agriculture adopt precision technologies while addressing their effects on agricultural workers. Consider the potential benefits, limitations, and tradeoffs of the approaches you propose. Use credible evidence from scientific research, economic information, expert sources, and/or real-world examples to support your argument. Address at least one competing approach or perspective and explain why your proposed strategy or combination of strategies offers an effective and balanced response. Generative AI should not be used at any step in your research, outlining, or writing process.

Choice 3: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and Poultry Resilience Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), commonly called bird flu, poses an ongoing threat to Virginia's poultry industry. HPAI is a highly contagious viral disease that can cause severe illness and death in domestic poultry. Wild birds, particularly waterfowl, can carry and spread avian influenza viruses and may introduce the virus into areas where commercial or backyard poultry are raised. Virginia confirmed HPAI in commercial poultry in Rockingham County in 2023 and on the Eastern Shore in Accomack County in 2025, and detections have continued among wild birds and commercial poultry in Virginia. When HPAI is detected in a commercial flock, measures such as quarantine and depopulation—the humane destruction of affected and exposed birds—may be necessary to limit further spread. These outbreaks can result in substantial losses for poultry producers and disruptions to the poultry supply chain. Potential strategies for reducing future risks include stronger farm biosecurity, increased disease surveillance and rapid testing, improved housing and facility practices, monitoring of wild bird populations, vaccination, new disease-detection technologies, and financial or technical assistance for producers. In your essay, argue which strategies should be prioritized to help Virginia's poultry industry reduce the risk and impact of future HPAI outbreaks. Consider the potential benefits, limitations, and tradeoffs of the approaches you propose. Use credible evidence from scientific research, economic information, expert sources, and/or real-world examples to support your argument. Address at least one competing approach or perspective and explain why your proposed strategy or combination of strategies offers an effective and balanced response. Generative AI should not be used at any step in your research, outlining, or writing process.

Student Name: _____**ESSAY A**

Type or paste **ESSAY A** below. The essay length should be **250 words or less**. Formatting within the essay box is limited. You may type and edit/format your essay using another application (i.e. Microsoft Word or Google Docs), then copy & paste it into the box below. Points will not be deducted for minor formatting issues. Refer to the rubrics for how your essay will be scored.

Student Name: _____

ESSAY B

Indicate which **ESSAY B prompt** you chose. Type or paste **ESSAY B** below. The essay length should be **500 words or less**. Formatting within the essay box is limited. You may type and edit/format your essay using another application (i.e. Microsoft Word or Google Docs), then copy & paste it into the box below. Points will not be deducted for minor formatting issues. Refer to the rubrics for how your essay will be scored.

Choice 1 ☐Choice 2 ☐Choice 3 ☐[Clear Choice](#)

Section 6: Assurances & Acknowledgements

Carefully read the following expectations & type your initials into the space provided.

I. Program Eligibility & Expectations

1. Previous participants of any Summer Residential Governor's School program (including Governor's Foreign Language Academies) shall not apply for nor participate in the Summer Residential Governor's School program.

Student Initials:

Parent Initials

2. I am expected to thoroughly read, understand, & follow the 2026 Student & Parent Guide for Governor's Schools & any other instructions provided by the program director.

Student Initials:

Parent Initials

3. Final notifications will be made by mid-April, & no information will be available before.

Student Initials:

Parent Initials

4. The programs require focus, preparation, & motivation. Emotional maturity, self-discipline & respect for myself, others, programs, & school is expected.

Student Initials:

Parent Initials

5. Participants are expected to arrive by the opening ceremony & remain through the closing ceremony. Leaves of absence are granted ONLY in the case of medical or family emergencies.

Student Initials:

Parent Initials

II. Conduct & Consequences

6. Possession of tobacco, alcohol, weapons, or nonprescription drugs will result in the immediate dismissal & be subject to any disciplinary action that the sponsoring school division or private school chooses to invoke. Certain infractions may also result in legal consequences as outlined in the Code of Virginia.

Student Initials:

Parent Initials

7. Failure to provide complete & accurate medical, mental, & prescription information may result in immediate dismissal.

Student Initials:

Parent Initials

III. Technology Assurances

8. The essay responses provided are my own original work. I have followed all school division & local school policies regarding the use of technology & artificial intelligence.

Student Initials: _____**Parent Initials** _____

9. The email address(es) listed in this application are my personal accounts, which are checked regularly. I understand that important communications will be sent to these addresses, including messages that could appear in spam or junk folders.

Student Initials: _____**Parent Initials** _____**IV. Waiver**

10. I waive my rights to review & inspect the application & score sheet for the Summer Residential Governor's School program.

Student Initials: _____**Parent Initials** _____

STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I certify that I am a resident of Virginia & eligible for free, public education in the Commonwealth, I am not applying for a 2027 Governor's Foreign Language Academy or for another Summer Residential Governor's School program & that these are my truthful responses to these assurances.

Full Name _____

Date _____

PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I permit my child, if selected, to participate in the 2027 Summer Residential Governor's School. I agree that I have been duly informed that leaves of absence from these programs are allowed only for severe cases of medical &/or family emergencies. Medical & family emergencies include major illness, hospitalization, or death of an immediate family member or guardian. Additionally, I understand that transportation to & from the Governor's School & money for personal expenses must be provided by participants. If selected, they must abide by the rules & expectations set forth for the school; failure or refusal to participate & abide by these rules & expectations may be just cause for immediate dismissal.

Full Name _____

Date _____