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The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) is awarding over \$444,000 in federal grants to three institutions, including William & Mary, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Radford University to promote an equal and inclusive environment in the state.

W&M and VCU were both awarded \$150,000, and Radford was awarded \$144,187, as per the goals set forth by the Board in its 2017-21 five-year federal-state plan.

According to the VBPD, the donation to Radford is meant to fulfill what's known as the "3 Cs Inclusion Project" by "building inclusive school communities through culture shift, collaboration, and coaching." Plans are to bring up the capacity of schools in the southwest areas of Virginia that make it their mission to serve all students.

"Inclusive education has been identified as a critical area of need in Virginia public schools as a practice to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities," said Liz Altieri, an associate professor with Radford University and project co-director.

"There is ample documentation of the effectiveness of inclusive educational practices that warrant support for a project designed to create two model school divisions - one county and one city - to build the capacity and achieve systems change."

The executive director of VBPD Heidi Lawyer said the Board is committed to creating and improving educational and employment opportunities. "These grants support the Board's mission, the Commonwealth's Employment First Policy and the Governor's focus on improving educational outcomes for all students."

For more information, please visit [vaboard.org](http://vaboard.org).