



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

February 17, 2017

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: National School Breakfast Week - March 6-10, 2017

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), in partnership with the School Nutrition Association (SNA), recognizes March 6-10, 2017, as National School Breakfast Week (NSBW). Public schools in Virginia will join with schools nationwide as they “*Take the School Breakfast Challenge*,” this year’s theme for the celebration.

Nearly 50 million school breakfasts were served to students in Virginia last year; however, this is less than half the number of school lunches served. All schools in Virginia are eligible to participate in the USDA School Breakfast Program (SBP); 1,846 schools (or approximately 98.8%) are participating this year. In the 2016-2017 school year, state incentive funding was awarded to 463 schools to implement alternate breakfast service models, such as grab and go breakfast, breakfast in the classroom, and breakfast after the bell. Early data show increases in student breakfast participation in these schools. All SBP participating school divisions in Virginia are also eligible to receive a \$0.22 per meal incentive payment for new school breakfasts served above an established meals served per student baseline; last year nearly \$4.9 million in incentive funding was earned for increased breakfast participation. These divisions also leveraged additional federal reimbursement as a result of the increased breakfast meals served.

School breakfast is an important component of the school day that can help students be ready to learn. Studies have shown that students who participate in the School Breakfast Program have improved overall diet quality, including greater consumption of grains, fruits, and milk; improved academic performance; and improved attendance. Increasing the number of students who eat a nutritious meal as part of the School Breakfast Program is an important step in improving the health of Virginia’s students, as well as their academic achievement.

The Department of Education’s Office of School Nutrition Programs has partnered with First Lady McAuliffe, No Kid Hungry Virginia, Virginia Hunger Solutions, Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, Southeastern United Dairy Industry Associates, American Dairy Association North East and others to promote school breakfast and provide resources and support to school divisions. The Governor will issue a proclamation for School Breakfast Week. No Kid Hungry Virginia will provide a toolkit for NSBW 2017 which the No Kid Hungry Virginia team will distribute to school divisions by email on Monday, February 27, 2017. Virginia Hunger Solutions will be releasing their 2017 *Virginia School Breakfast Report* during NSBW to share school breakfast program best practices and recognize top performing schools and school divisions in Virginia. A *Discover School Breakfast Tool Kit* with additional resources is also available on the USDA website at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/sbp-materials>. A *Take the School Breakfast Challenge Tool Kit* is available on the SNA website at: <http://schoolnutrition.org/Meetings/Events/NSBW/2017/>. School breakfast grants are available from Action for Healthy Kids.org at: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/tools-for-schools/apply-for-grants/>.

If there are questions or additional information is needed, contact Sandy Curwood, Director of School Nutrition Programs, by telephone at (804) 225-2074 or by email at sandra.curwood@doe.virginia.gov or contact the school nutrition program specialist assigned to your division.

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