



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

March 24, 2017

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Month of the Military Child

On behalf of the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), I am pleased to announce that Governor McAuliffe has issued a [certificate of proclamation](#) recognizing April 2017 as the **Month of the Military Child**, a special time to celebrate and honor our military-connected children and their families. Additionally, the Virginia Board of Education issued a resolution commemorating April 2017 as the Month of the Military Child at its meeting, March 23, 2017.

Frequent moves, family separations through deployments, and the return following deployments can make school-, home-, and community-life challenging for military children. Yet, even in such circumstances, these students continually demonstrate resilience and perseverance. Their contributions to our schools and communities also include unique and valuable perspectives on learning, friendship, and growing up.

Virginia is a proud member of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and is committed to the care and education of the children of the men and women of our armed forces. By partnering with school liaison officers, military leaders, educators, and community organizations, VDOE provides resources about the unique support needed for military service members and their families during all stages of transition and deployment. While April has been designated as the Month of the Military Child, schools and school divisions are encouraged to take time throughout the year to recognize the nation's military servicemen and servicewomen, their families, and their children.

To assist schools in the planning the Month of the Military Child celebrations, VDOE has developed resources which are available on [VDOE's Military Families web pages](#). We encourage schools to use these materials and ideas in planning the Month of the Military Child activities throughout April.

- **Video Message from the First Lady of Virginia, Mrs. Dorothy McAuliffe**

Mrs. McAuliffe is a passionate advocate for making Virginia the most welcoming state for military families and veterans. She has recorded a video message for students to kick off the Commonwealth's observance of April as the Month of the Military Child. The video is available on [VDOE's Month of the Military Child web page](#) for download. We encourage schools to play the First Lady's inspiring message during school announcements or other student assemblies in April.

- **Customized Certificate of Recognition**

Service members are often recognized with certificates and medals for their outstanding service, and now children will be able to hang their own certificate of recognition along with those of their parents. The VDOE has created a certificate of recognition, available on [VDOE's Month of the Military Child web page](#), which schools can download, customize with the name of a military student, print, and present to military-connected students at a Month of the Military Child assembly, luncheon, or other recognition event. The signatures on the certificate represent the important partnership between our military leaders and schools.

- **"Wall of Honor" Recognition**

Schools are encouraged to display a "Wall of Honor" as a visual depiction of the school's military

student population. These bulletin boards typically display pictures of military-connected students, or different color graphics (based on military branch) representing the number of military students in the school.

- **“Share Your Story” Project**

Whether a military dependent yourself, classmate, friend, or neighbor of a military student, all are impacted by the military community in Virginia. The VDOE encourages teachers to incorporate Month of the Military Child recognition in their instruction by having students share their military-connection stories through such means as the visual arts, creative writing, musical composition, and poetry.

- **“Purple Up! For Military Kids” Day**

Across the State, Friday, April 21, 2017, will be the day to “Purple Up! For Military Kids.” We encourage the entire school community – teachers, principals, students, parents, bus drivers, and staff to wear purple on April 21 to show support for our military students and appreciation for their strength and sacrifices. Purple represents the blending of the colors of the five branches of our armed forces. Here in Virginia, we are proud to be home to Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, National Guard and Reserve families. The VDOE has provided flyers, available on [VDOE’s Month of the Military Child web page](#), to display in your school for the Purple Up! celebration.

We encourage schools to share their “Purple Up!” and “Month of the Military Child” photos by using the hashtag #PurpleUpVirginia on social media. The VDOE will be reposting your efforts on our various social media platforms. Photos and/or descriptions of your activities can also be sent to Dan Dunham, VDOE Military Student and Family Specialist, at Dan.Dunham@doe.virginia.gov, for sharing with the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

For more information on Month of the Military Child or resources for military-connected students, please contact Dan Dunham, VDOE Military Student and Family Specialist, at Dan.Dunham@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-2157. The VDOE Military Student and Family Specialist is also available to answer questions about implementation of the Interstate Compact or the military student identifier, connect you with your local school liaison officer, and provide training to your school or division.

I hope that you and other educators in your division will take time during the month of April to join with us to celebrate the many contributions of military-connected students and to honor their service to our great nation.

SRS/DLD/nlc