



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

April 21, 2017

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: School Lunch Hero Day – May 5, 2017

School Lunch Hero Day is a national celebration to recognize and honor the dedicated school nutrition program professionals who prepare healthy and delicious school meals for our students every school day. To recognize their hard work and dedication, the Virginia Department of Education will join schools around the country in celebrating School Nutrition Employee Appreciation Week, May 1-5, 2017, culminating with the fifth annual School Lunch Hero Day on Friday, May 5. Initiated by the School Nutrition Association and Jarrett Krosoczka, author of the “Lunch Lady” graphic novel series, the day aims to showcase the ways in which school nutrition professionals make a difference in the lives of the students they serve.

School nutrition professionals must balance many roles and follow federal, state, and local regulations to ensure safe and healthy meals are available at school. Federal nutrition standards are designed to ensure that school nutrition programs offer fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat or fat-free milk every day. School meals must also meet limits on calories, sodium, and unhealthy fats. Participation in school meals support student academic success.

For many children, school meals are the most important meals of their day. In Virginia, almost 50 million breakfasts and nearly 113 million lunches were served last school year. More than 275,000 breakfasts and 625,000 lunches are served to Virginia’s students each school day.

Please join us in showcasing the difference school nutrition professionals make for every student who participates in the school nutrition program. For more information, ideas for celebrating School Nutrition Employee Appreciation Week, and ways to recognize the School Nutrition Heroes in your school, visit the [School Nutrition Association website](#).

If you have questions, please contact the school nutrition program specialist assigned to your division, or Sandy Curwood, PhD, RDN, Director of School Nutrition Programs, at sandra.curwood@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2074.

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