



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

July 15, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Release of July 1, 2015 School-age Population Estimates Used to Distribute Fiscal Year 2018 Sales Tax Revenues, and Estimate Review Process

Pursuant to [Section 58.1-638, Code of Virginia](#), the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia has prepared the July 1, 2015, school-age population estimates. These estimates will be used to update the fiscal year 2018 sales tax revenue distribution estimates to school divisions in the Governor's proposed amendments to the 2016-2018 biennial budget, to be released in December 2016. Fiscal year 2018 funding distributions based on the July 1, 2015 school-age population estimates will not be released until the Governor's budget release in December 2016. Please note that the distribution of actual sales tax receipts to school divisions on a semi-monthly basis in fiscal year 2018 will also be based on the July 1, 2015, school-age population estimates.

[Attachment A](#) to this memo includes a table that displays total and percent changes of school-age population by school division from 2014 to 2015. This table, along with the detailed information from Weldon Cooper referenced below, will assist divisions with the estimation of changes to their fiscal year 2018 sales tax distributions as well as assist with the technical reviews of the proposed estimates.

The sales tax revenue distribution for fiscal year 2017 will continue to be based on the previously released July 1, 2014 school-age population estimates; please see [Superintendent's Memo No. 184-15](#) for more information.

Weldon Cooper Center School-Age Population Estimates as of July 1, 2015

A data file containing the July 1, 2015, school-age population estimate for each division (including the special education counts) and a document providing an overview of the methodology used by the Weldon Cooper Center in producing the estimates have been posted on the Weldon Cooper Center's Web site at: <http://www.coopercenter.org/demographics/school-age-population-estimates>. The availability of the estimates has also been announced to local governments via the Virginia Municipal League (VML) and the Virginia Association of Counties (VACO).

Weldon Cooper Center's estimates of school-age population (5- to 19-year-olds) as of July 1, 2015 utilize U.S. Census Bureau population estimates as of July 1, 2015, with adjustments, as required by the *Code of Virginia*, to account for 18- and 19-year-olds living at a college or on a military base outside the locality where their parents/guardians reside. Pursuant to Section 58.1-638 D., the Department of Education added the number of special education students (ages 2 through 4 and 20 through 21) as reported on the December 1, 2015 special education child count to the Weldon Cooper Center's estimates. The Weldon Cooper Center provides a full description of their estimation methodology at the Web page referenced above.

Weldon Cooper Center Review Process

The July 1, 2015 school-age population estimates are open to review and inquiry until September 30, 2016. School divisions and localities may inquire about a revision to their estimates provided certain criteria as established by the Weldon Cooper Center are met.

To participate in the review process, division and locality representatives should review their school-age population estimates, the methodology documents, and the Review/Inquiry Process description, available on the Weldon Cooper Center Web site at: <http://www.coopercenter.org/demographics/school-age-population-estimates>.

School division and locality representatives are urged to initiate the review and inquiry process (if any of the conditions for revision are met) by contacting the Weldon Cooper Center as soon as possible so that additional considerations can be submitted by the conclusion of the process on September 30, 2016. After this date, the estimates will be considered final and will be used in fiscal year 2018 to allocate to divisions the one and one-eighth percent state sales and use tax dedicated to public education.

The Weldon Cooper Center contact for questions is:

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Please carefully review the proposed estimates of your school-age population and keep in mind the end of the review process on September 30, 2016, at which time the estimates become final.

SRS/dtm

Attachments:

- A. [School-Age Population Estimates – Total and Percent Change 2014 to 2015](#) (PDF)