



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

August 26, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Save the date for 2017 Statewide Tornado Drill

The annual Statewide Tornado Drill will take place **Tuesday, March 21, 2017, at 9:45 a.m.** The date will be observed as Tornado Preparedness Day. (If widespread severe weather threatens the commonwealth on that date, then the drill will be rescheduled for Wednesday, March 22, at 9:45 a.m.)

In 2016, Virginia was hit by the deadliest tornado event since 1959, resulting in five fatalities and more than 45 injuries. An EF-1 tornado touched down on the Town of Waverly in Sussex County, an EF-3 tornado affected Appomattox County and another EF-3 tornado hit the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck region. The National Weather Service (NWS) verified that a total of eight tornadoes struck Virginia during that storm.

The Code of Virginia in § 22.1-137.1 requires all public schools to participate in at least one tornado drill each year. Participation in the March 21 statewide drill will fulfill that requirement. *Schools may choose an alternate date or time if this is not convenient.*

The Virginia Department of Education supports participation in Tornado Preparedness Day, so please put March 21, 2017, on your calendars and use the day for educating staff and students about tornadoes as well as holding a drill, if it suits your schedule. Online registration for the drill is not yet open, but the Virginia Department of Emergency Management advises us that registration should be up by mid-November at www.ReadyVirginia.gov so check the site then.

If you have questions about Tornado Preparedness Day or the statewide drill, please call or write:

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