# Superintendent’s Memo #289-19


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: December 20, 2019

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Virginia Reads One Book: *The Toothpaste Millionaire*

The Virginia Department of Education is pleased to announce [*Virginia Reads One Book 2020*](https://readtothem.org/varob2020/). Elementary students and families in participating schools and divisions across the Commonwealth can participate in a statewide family reading event in March 2020.

Every elementary student, in participating schools, along with teachers and all school staff, will be given a copy of this year’s chosen title, *The Toothpaste Millionaire*, by Jean Merrill. This story of entrepreneurship and friendship can be enjoyed by elementary school students, while also engaging older students.

The kickoff for this year’s event will be March 6, 2020, with a video made by "Blazer Fresh," an educational rap trio, made famous by their videos on the children's YouTube channel "GoNoodle." Each evening, for three weeks after the kickoff event, students and families will read one chapter a night. Meanwhile, schools celebrate the story with assemblies, daily trivia questions, and activities across all curriculums.  [Lessons and activities developed by the Virginia Council on Economic Education](http://vcee.org/elementary-school/virginia-reads-one-book/)will be available to teach basic economics and personal finance concepts aligned with Virginia’s Standards of Learning.  Family guides with activities that promote family and financial literacy will also be provided. *Virginia Reads One Book* will culminate with countless local celebrations and events for students and families.

*Virginia Reads One Book*is provided by [Read to Them](http://readtothem.org/), a Richmond-based nonprofit whose mission is to create a culture of literacy in every home.  Read to Them provides resources that highlight the value of reading aloud along with a host of curriculum, family, and community materials to accompany the selected book. These resources combine to help schools, families, and communities explore and celebrate literature together with the goal that families will make reading together a habit that creates lifelong readers. For more information or to sign up, please visit: [readtothem.org/programs/Virginia-reads-one-book](https://readtothem.org/programs/virginia-reads-one-book-2/) or contact Cathy Plageman, Program Coordinator, ***Virginia Reads One Book,*** at cathy.plageman@readtothem.org or by telephone at (804) 334-5872.

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