



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
**Department of Education**

**DATE:** April 20, 2018  
**TO:** Division Superintendents  
**FROM:** Steven M. Constantino, Ed.D., Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**SUBJECT: School Lunch Hero Day**

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 7-11, 2018. The kick off to School Nutrition Employee Week will start on Friday, May 4, 2018, with the sixth annual School Lunch Hero Day. Initiated by the School Nutrition Association and Jarrett Krosoczka, author of the "Lunch Lady" graphic novel series, the day aims to highlight 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 to students. 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 while meeting limits on calories, sodium, and unhealthy fats. Every day the school nutrition professionals translate these into appealing meals to feed young minds and support academic success.

For many children, school meals are the most important meals of their day. In Virginia, 53 million breakfasts and 114.3 million lunches were served last school year. More than 229,075 breakfasts and 634,850 lunches are served to Virginia's students each school day.

Please join us in highlighting 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](#) ➡.

Please forward any events you would like highlighted by the VDOE. 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](mailto:sandra.curwood@doe.virginia.gov) ✉ or by telephone at (804) 225-2074.

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