



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

**DATE:** September 1, 2017  
**TO:** Division Superintendents  
**FROM:** Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**SUBJECT: Make Some Noise for Virginia Farm-to-School Week: October 2-6, 2017**

The purpose of this memo is to encourage school divisions to participate in Farm-to-School Week scheduled for October 2-6, 2017, and to recognize October as National Farm-to-School Month. This year's theme is "Make Some Noise for Farm-to-School."

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) is excited to announce the First Annual Crunch Heard 'Round the Commonwealth! On **October 4th at 10 a.m.**, everyone is encouraged to show their support and make some noise for Farm-to-School efforts by crunching on a Virginia Grown crop. More information can be found at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition/index.shtml>.

The Virginia Farm-to-School program enriches relationships between students, schools, and their communities by shifting food purchasing practices and enhancing learning opportunities about food, nutrition, farming and environmental stewardship in schools across the Commonwealth. Virginia Farm-to-School is celebrated every first week of October, in accordance with House Joint Resolution 692 passed in 2015. School divisions in Virginia can celebrate with locally-procured foods featured on school menus, school garden celebrations, field trips to local family farms, poster contests, guest farmers in classrooms and cafeterias, and other educational activities.

Virginia students, schools, farmers, and communities reap the benefits of Farm-to-School. More information on Virginia's Farm-to-School efforts can be found at: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition/index.shtml> and <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/marketing-virginia-farm-to-school-program.shtml> ↗.

Agriculture is the largest industry in Virginia. According to the VDACS, agriculture generates \$70 billion annually and provides more than 334,000 jobs in Virginia. Farmland comprises 32 percent of land in the Commonwealth, providing tangible products such as food and intangible benefits, including wildlife habitat, biodiversity, recreation, tourism, and soil and water quality management.

Visit the National Farm-to-School website at <http://www.farmtoschool.org/> ↗ for ideas and information on how to celebrate in your division. To order a toolkit for your school, please contact Trista Grigsby, School Nutrition Programs Farm-to-School Specialist, at (804) 225-2331 or [Trista.Grigsby@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Trista.Grigsby@doe.virginia.gov).

Lastly, VDOE's USDA Farm-to-School grant work plan is in progress! School food authorities will be requested to fill out a 2017 Farm-to-School survey to be distributed in October.

SRS/SCC/ag