



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

August 29, 2014

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Dental Survey

A statewide dental survey of third-grade children will be conducted during the 2014-2015 school year by the Dental Health Program at the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). The information from the survey will be used to assist VDH in determining the current status of dental health needs and planning for future programs. A sample of approximately 9,000 children will be randomly selected from school divisions to best represent the state. If schools in your division are selected, I encourage your participation.

The oral health survey will consist of a clinical screening using a disposable dental explorer and mirror. No X-rays will be taken. Licensed dentists or dental hygienists from VDH will do the examinations. It is anticipated that the open mouth survey will take less than three minutes per child. The survey is voluntary. Only children with signed parent/guardian consent forms will be able to participate. Information from the examinations will be obtained about dental decay, fillings, immediate need for care, and dental sealants. Demographic information such as age, gender, race, insurance coverage, and free lunch status will also be obtained from parents/guardians as part of the permission process. Parents will be notified by a written report of the results of the dental screening for their children. All information for the individual student will be kept strictly confidential.

The Dental Health Program would like to conduct this survey between late September and early December 2014, at a time that suits school schedules. Once schools are randomly selected, the superintendent will be notified by mail, with detailed instructions for participation. If approved by the superintendent, VDH staff will contact principals for further consent and scheduling. Your assistance in encouraging school level cooperation is greatly appreciated. Sample copies of all forms and letters used during the survey process will be sent with the request for participation to those school divisions and schools that are selected. Letters and forms will be available in multiple languages, as needed.

School level participation is encouraged. Dental health is an important component of a child's overall health and can affect the ability of a child to concentrate in the classroom or attend school. Participation has been very good in past dental surveys by schools and parents.

Should you have further questions about the dental survey, please contact Dr. Karen Day, public health dentist, at 804-864-7824 or by email at karen.day@vdh.virginia.gov, or Tia Campbell, school health specialist, at 804-786-8671 or by email at Tia.Campbell@doe.virginia.gov.

SRS/TBC

