

**VIRGINIA
PROJECT 365**

TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER

Virginia Department of Education

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Commonwealth of Virginia, Office of Governor Terry McAuliffe

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Governor McAuliffe Announces School Divisions in Southwest Virginia and Richmond to Benefit from Grant to Fight Childhood Hunger

Innovative Demonstration Project will Connect Students to Nutritious Meals

RICHMOND – Governor Terry McAuliffe and First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe announced today that high-poverty schools in Richmond and seven Southwest Virginia school divisions will participate in a demonstration project to reduce childhood hunger and improve food security among low-income families.

“Children must have dependable access to nutritious daily meals in order for them to grow strong, learn and eventually become part of the educated workforce we need to build a new Virginia economy,” said **Governor McAuliffe**. “The First Lady and I are committed to ending childhood hunger in the Commonwealth, whether it is found in the inner city or in the rural communities of Southwest Virginia.”

Mrs. McAuliffe will spearhead the Virginia Hunger-Free Kids Act Demonstration Project. As First Lady, Mrs. McAuliffe has dedicated her time and energy to eliminating childhood hunger and improving access to fresh, Virginia-grown agricultural products.

“This project is about breaking down the barriers that separate hungry children and families from the good food they need,” said **First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe**. “We will build on successful local and regional efforts and pilot innovative models for reducing hunger and food insecurity.”

The Governor and First Lady made the announcement at Woodville Elementary in Richmond. They were joined by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, who last week announced the \$8.8 million federal grant that will fund the anti-hunger effort in Virginia.

The project will combat hunger among school-age children by transforming schools into “food hubs” during the 2015-2016 school year and by providing additional assistance to families over the following summer vacation.

During the school year, students in the selected schools will be offered a nutritious breakfast, lunch and after-school supper – and packs of easily consumed non-perishable food to take home on weekends and breaks.

School families participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will receive an additional \$60 a month in benefits during the summer. Families of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals but not enrolled in SNAP also will receive \$60 a month to improve food security. In addition, one parent or other caregiver from each participating family will be encouraged to participate in a nutrition education program on shopping and preparing healthy food on a limited budget, conducted by Virginia Cooperative Extension's Family Nutrition Program.

The participating school divisions are Bristol City, Buchanan County, Galax City, Grayson County, Lee County, Richmond City, Scott County and Smyth County.

The divisions were selected by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) – which is serving as the lead agency on the project – based on the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals and state accreditation status. VDOE's Office of School Nutrition will provide day-to-day oversight and coordination of the demonstration project.

"I am eager to see the impact of this effort on learning and achievement," **Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples** said. "A child who is hungry – or anxious about being hungry – is not able to focus and is more likely to be tardy or absent. It stands to reason that if we can take away those worries, we'll see better outcomes for students."


Nearly 20 percent of households in Southwest Virginia experience poverty, compared with 11 percent statewide. The median annual household income in the region is \$37,663 – 59 percent of the statewide average of \$63,636. Richmond's poverty rate stands at nearly 27 percent and the city's median household income of \$40,496 is 63 percent of the statewide average.

The Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Social Services, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, the Federation of Virginia Food Banks, Virginia Cooperative Extension's SNAP-ED division and Share Our Strength, a national nonprofit focused on ending child hunger, are also participating in the project.

[Link to Governor McAuliffe's News Releases](#)

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PURPOSE/OVERVIEW

The Commonwealth of Virginia seeks to demonstrate that childhood hunger among school-aged children can be eliminated by ensuring that children have access to healthy meals where they live, learn, and play 365 days a year. Student achievement and behavior improves when students are well nourished and ready to learn. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and its partners in school divisions, state agencies and community organizations are striving to develop innovative models to end childhood hunger in Virginia.

GOALS

- 1) To end childhood hunger in participating areas by 2018.
- 2) To nourish a student's mind and body so they can excel and have improved school performance.
- 3) To be the nation's leader in ending childhood hunger through partnerships, collaboration and innovative service delivery.

For more information about School Nutrition in Virginia please visit www.doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition.

VIRGINIA PROJECT 365

To END Childhood HUNGER

The Virginia 365 Project To End Childhood Hunger is funded by a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant.

March 2016

PARTNERS

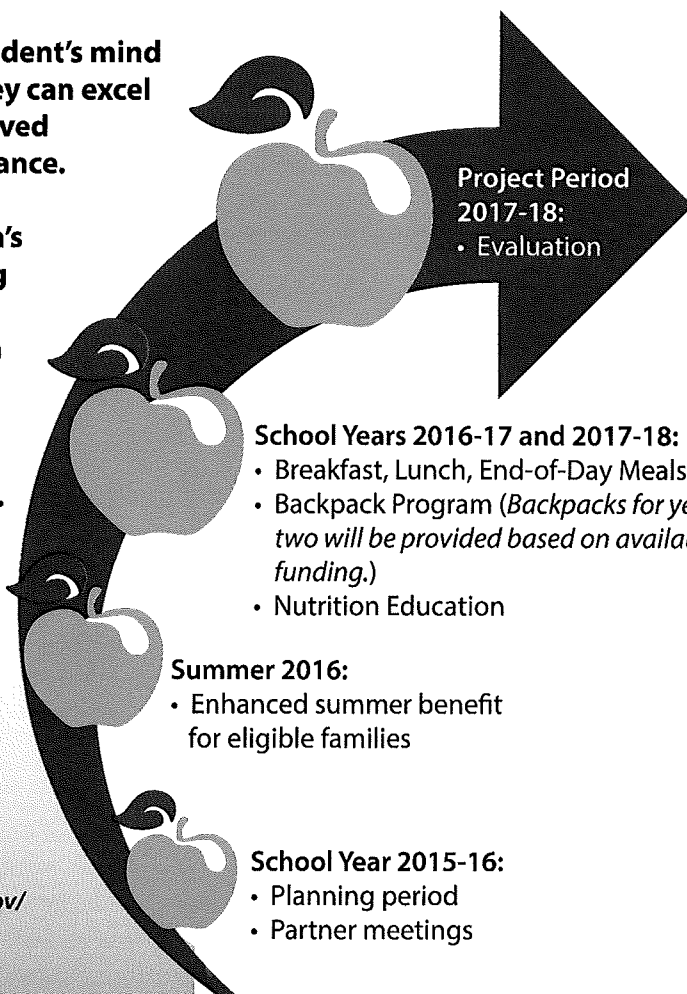
First Lady of Virginia Dorothy McAuliffe
 Feeding America Southwest Virginia
 FeedMore
 Share Our Strength
 Southeast United Dairy Industry Association
 Virginia Department of Education
 Virginia Department of Health
 Virginia Department of Social Services
 Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth
 Virginia Tech - Cooperative Extension

HOW IT WILL WORK

The Virginia 365 Project to End Childhood Hunger will consist of the following components:

- 3 Meals a day provided to students, including the supper meal at the school site
- 6 Objectives:
 - To provide three meals a day to children at school during the week.
 - To provide food for weekends/school breaks via a backpack program.
 - To provide an enhanced summer benefit to eligible families.
 - To teach parents/guardians how to shop for and cook healthy food on a limited budget.
 - To conduct an evaluation of the project through a partnership with Mathematica Policy Research.
 - To market and promote the efforts of the project.

- 5 Healthy components: Fruits; Vegetables; Grains; Meats/Meat Alternates; and Milk



Project Period 2017-18:
• Evaluation

School Years 2016-17 and 2017-18:

- Breakfast, Lunch, End-of-Day Meals
- Backpack Program (*Backpacks for year two will be provided based on available funding.*)
- Nutrition Education

Summer 2016:

- Enhanced summer benefit for eligible families

School Year 2015-16:

- Planning period
- Partner meetings



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