



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **2008 Triennial School Census Under Way** *Census Data Drives Distribution of State Sales Tax Proceeds*

Virginia's 132 school divisions are gearing up for the 2008 Triennial School Census of school-age children. The triennial census count is used to distribute state sales tax proceeds to school divisions as a part of the commonwealth's funding formula for public schools. State and local education officials are urging all residents to respond to the survey, regardless of whether they have children enrolled in public school.

"It is important for all families with school-age children to respond to the census, even if their children attend private or parochial schools or are home-schooled," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Billy K. Cannaday Jr. "If a school division receives less than its fair share of sales tax revenue, then the locality has to draw more deeply from resources that otherwise could be used to support other services."

The commonwealth returns 1.125 percent of the revenue collected through the five percent state sales and use tax to localities to support public education, which is approximately \$1.1 billion for the current fiscal year. The money is distributed based on the number of school-age children (ages 5-19) counted during the triennial census. Revenues from the sales tax may be used by school divisions for maintenance, operations, capital projects and debt service. The 2005 Triennial School Census counted 1,484,948 school-age children and young adults.

State law designates January 1 through July 15 as the period for school divisions to conduct the census. Most school divisions begin distributing information — including census forms and instructions for completing the census online — to households in early spring. Some divisions employ enumerators to visit unresponsive households.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has directed school divisions to report a summary count of all persons ages 5-19 residing within the localities served by the division no later than August 15.

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