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## **Student Art Exhibit Honors Military Families** *Students Share Experiences, Feelings Through Artwork*

RICHMOND, Va. — In celebration of the Month of the Military Child, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is hosting a student art exhibit in the lobby of the James Monroe Building in Richmond. The exhibit, featuring artwork from K-12 students (military and civilian) from Virginia Beach and Norfolk, is sponsored by the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) and the military School Liaison Officers.

“The artwork and student narratives communicate the sacrifices, challenges and resiliency of military children,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples. “This moving exhibit helps the larger community experience military service and sacrifice through the eyes of our youngest heroes.”

The contest, in its fourth year, is the result of a partnership between the School Liaison Officers of Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story and Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia Beach City Public Schools and Lynnhaven Mall. It is part of a larger art competition sponsored by the MCEC which began in 2002. The 25 works of art on display in Richmond until April 28 are a small sampling of a larger exhibit at the Lynnhaven Mall in Virginia Beach.

“MCEC believes that artistic expression is a pure, sincere and candid method children use to communicate pride in their parents, celebrate their military-connected lives, acknowledge their grief or worry, and so much more,” said Mary Keller, President and CEO of MCEC. “We hope this display paints a picture that represents these unique, resilient children making their own sacrifices and serving our country.”

Governor McAuliffe has issued a [Certificate of Recognition](#) proclaiming April 2016 as the Month of the Military Child, to celebrate and honor military-connected children and their families. The Virginia Board of Education issued a [resolution](#) commemorating April 2016 at the Month of the Military Child.

Additionally, Friday, April 15 is “Purple Up Day” (#PurpleUpVirginia). People across the nation are encouraged to wear purple in support of military students and appreciation for their strength and sacrifices. Purple represents the blending of the colors of the five branches of our armed forces.

In honor of Month of the Military Child, First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe has prepared a [video message](#). Classroom tools and ideas are available on the [VDOE website](#). A number of resources to help schools, communities and families support military children through transitions and deployments are on the [VDOE Military Family Web page](#).

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