



#077-21

**Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #077-21**

DATE: March 26, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Celebrating Military-Connected Students**

Virginia is a proud member of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and is committed to the care and education of the children of the men and women of our armed forces. By partnering with school liaison officers, military leaders, educators, and community organizations, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) provides resources about the unique support needed for military service members and their families during all stages of transition and deployment.

Information is provided below to assist school divisions in serving our military children and families.

April is Month of the Military Child

Governor Northam has designated April 2021 as the Month of the Military Child.

Frequent moves, family separations through deployments, and reintegration following deployments can make school, home, and community life challenging for military children. Yet, even in such circumstances, these students continually demonstrate resilience and perseverance. Their contributions to our schools and communities also include unique and valuable perspectives on learning, friendships, and growing up.

To assist schools in planning the Month of the Military Child celebrations, VDOE developed resources that are available on VDOE's Military Families webpage. We encourage schools to use these materials and ideas while planning Month of the Military Child activities throughout April.

We encourage schools to share their "Purple Up!" and "Month of the Military Child" photos by using the hashtag #PurpleUpVirginia on social media. Photos and/or descriptions of the activities can also be sent to Dan Dunham, VDOE Military Student and Family Specialist, for sharing with the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

While April has been designated as the Month of the Military Child, schools and school divisions are encouraged to take time throughout the year to recognize the nation's military service men and women, their families, and their children.

Purple Star Designation

In 2018, VDOE launched the Purple Star School Designation for military-friendly schools that have demonstrated a major commitment to students and families connected to our nation's military. Schools that earn the award will receive a special Purple Star recognition to display on-site. The application window for school year 2021-2022 will begin April 1, 2021, and close September 21, 2021. Schools should visit the [Purple Star Designation](#) webpage for more information on or after April 1, 2021.

Remote Registration for Military Students

Recent reviews of school division webpages indicate some lack specific navigation regarding remote registration for military-connected students. The *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-3. [Persons to whom public schools shall be free](#), Section B 1-3 outlines enrollment flexibilities for military families.

Regarding remote registration, the *Code* stipulates that military-connected students "*may register, remotely or in-person, for courses and other academic programs and participate in the lottery process for charter schools and college partnership laboratory schools in the*

school division in which such student will reside at the same time and in the same manner as students who reside in the local school division.”

Schools are encouraged to provide clear and concise information on their division’s remote registration process for military families moving into their school division.

Military Signing Day

Schools across the Commonwealth take time each year to recognize those students who sign letters of intent for athletics or who are honored with four-year scholarships to colleges and universities. It is now time for schools to also celebrate the choice students have made to enlist in the United States Military. I am pleased to announce that a virtual Military Signing Day celebration will be held on May 12, 2021. More details, including registering for the event, can be found on the VDOE’s Military Families webpage or by contacting Dan Dunham.

Military Recruiter Access

The *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-130.1. [Access to high schools and high school students for military recruiters](#) reinforces that schools are to permit military recruiters to participate in career and technical education programs promoting knowledge of careers and various employment opportunities. This access is to be provided at the same time and manner as other persons or groups promoting professional, occupational, or educational pursuits.

The VDOE encourages you and other educators in your division to take time during the month of April, and throughout the year, to join with us to celebrate the many contributions of military-connected students and to honor their service to our great nation.

For more information

For more information on the content of this memo, or any issues related to military students or training for your school or division, please contact Dan Dunham, VDOE Military Student and Family Specialist, at Dan.Dunham@doe.virginia.gov, or by telephone at (804) 225-2157.

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- Resource: [Virginia Military Families Webpage](#)