May is the month to show some Teacher Appreciation!

Governor McDonnell Issues Executive Order Creating Governor's Teacher Cabinet — Encourages Students, Parents and Education Leaders to Nominate Teachers —

Governor Bob McDonnell today issued Executive Order No. 63, establishing the Governor’s Teacher Cabinet. The Cabinet, comprised of teachers from across the Commonwealth, will advise the Governor and Secretary of Education on policies related to the status of teaching in Virginia. The Cabinet will focus on strategies for enhancing teacher quality, leadership and professionalism for 21st Century learning.

Speaking about today’s announcement, Governor McDonnell said, “Last year, I assembled a teacher workgroup led by retired teacher and House Majority Leader Kirk Cox (R-Colonial Heights) and Secretary of Education Laura Fornash to aid in the development of my ALL STUDENTS agenda. The teacher workgroup provided meaningful and substantive advice over the course of the past year. Today I am pleased to announce the creation of the Governor’s Teacher Cabinet to continue to advise my administration. The Teacher’s Cabinet will recommend short term action and long term strategy to improve teaching and continue to recognize this distinguished profession. I encourage teachers to submit nominations and parents and local leaders to nominate a deserving teacher in your community."

Secretary of Education Laura Fornash remarked, "Today's announcement demonstrates Governor McDonnell’s unwavering dedication to partner with Virginia's teachers. The Teacher Cabinet will look for ways to celebrate and reward our teachers who serve as exemplars for their colleagues. I look forward to working with the Teacher Cabinet to identify strategies to enhance teacher quality, leadership and professionalism with the ultimate goal of creating meaningful learning experiences for ALL students."

Retired Teacher, ALL STUDENTS Co-Chair and House Majority Leader Kirk Cox (R-Colonial Heights), said "Teachers are in a great position to offer advice and input that will improve our educational system. I am confident that their invaluable advice will help ensure every child in our schools can receive a top-quality education."

LEGAL LINGO: Creating a Special Needs Trust for a loved one

by Rebecca Geller, Attorney at Law

Many families assume that their children with special needs will be cared for in the event something happens to the parents. However, a Special Needs Trust is critical to ensure that your child's medical benefits are not jeopardized due to a potential inheritance (even if it is a small inheritance).

This is an issue that is near and dear to my heart. My brother-in-law has cerebral palsy, is a quadriplegic and lives in a wonderful group home. To ensure that he will always have the services he needs, we have created a Special Needs Trust to take care of him - something every family should have in order to protect your relative or child with special needs. The Law Office of Rebecca Geller is offering a 10% discount on Special Needs Trusts to families with PEATC through May 30, 2013.

What is a Special Needs Trust?

It is a legal tool that allows you to provide for a loved one with a disability who requires long-term medical or support needs. You can create such a trust now, or through your will, you can direct that the trust be created with some or all of the assets in your estate.

Why do I need a Special Needs Trust?

Regardless of your loved one's age, you should ensure that you leave assets in a way that does not affect his/her eligibility for government benefits. If a parent dies without a will or leaves assets directly to a special-needs child, and the child receives more than $2,000, most government benefits will be lost. Therefore, you should leave assets for a loved one with a disability directly to a special needs trust. Such a trust can provide money for "extras" that will improve your loved one's quality of life without endangering his or her eligibility for government benefits. Some of these "extras" include vacations, personal electronics, home care, transportation, hobby or recreational items, or extraordinary medical care.

Can't I Leave Money to the Guardian of My Special Needs Child Instead?

Some people consider leaving money to a trusted relative for the long-term care of their loved one with a disability. Complications arise, however, when the trusted relative unexpectedly predeceases the disabled person, and the assets pass to someone without the commitment to meet your loved one's needs. Without provisions in place like a Special Needs Trust, your loved one may have to survive on Social Security Insurance benefits alone, which are well below the poverty level. Careful planning via a Special Needs Trust can help prevent these problems.

How Do I Get Started in Creating a Special Needs Trust?

The Law Office of Rebecca Geller offers a free initial phone consult to anyone interested in a special needs trust. Please email me at RGeller@rebeccagellerlaw.com to schedule yours. The 10% Discount to PEATC families is valid through May 30, 2013.

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May is the month to show some Teacher Appreciation!

Showing Appreciation for Remarkable Teachers


As a high school student who plans to become a teacher, Teacher Appreciation Week is always an exciting time. Not only do we actually stop to recognize the important work that educators do and thank them for it, it is also the week that CCSSO’s National Teacher of the Year is announced. (Congratulations to Mrs. Shearer, the 2011 National Teacher of the Year!)

This year, I was lucky enough to attend the National Teacher of the Year awards ceremony, which was held in the Rose Garden at the White House, as well as meet Secretary Duncan. It was an amazing experience to meet the U.S. Secretary of Education and be among all the State Teachers of the Year. Hearing about the impact these teachers have made, I couldn’t help but think about my favorite teacher, Ms. Mariarosa da Costa, and the influence that she’s had on me and so many of her other students.

Like the State Teachers of the Year, Ms. da Costa is one of those teachers that students remember for a lifetime. In fact, my passion for teaching was inspired by her. She was my first and second grade teacher at the Oliver Street School in Newark, New Jersey. Ms. da Costa infused in me my love for reading. I vividly remember her giving me my first chapter book, Junie B. Jones and the Stupid Smelly Bus.

She taught me that reading could open up a new and exciting world, a gift that has remained with me to this day.

Ms. da Costa also taught me the importance of a teacher who cared deeply about her students. She was typically the first teacher to arrive each day at school and often the last one to leave. She took such pride and happiness in our progress and accomplishments. Even as a small child, I knew that I wanted to become a teacher like her.

Ms. da Costa showed me what an important role schools and teachers play in children’s lives. They bind neighborhoods and communities together. They represent hope, trust, joy, laughter, opportunity, progress, and mobility. As President Obama said yesterday at the National Teacher of the Year Ceremony, “Everybody has got a story like that, about that teacher who made the extra effort to shape our lives in important ways.”

If you haven’t done so already, be sure to thank the teacher that has made a special impact on your life during this special week.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Leilani Bell is the national student president of the Future Educators Association. She is a senior at Science Park High School in Newark, NJ. In the fall, she will begin her college education at The College of New Jersey. Her goal is to become a high school history teacher.

ARTICLE SOURCE:
http://www.ed.gov/blog/2011/05/showing-appreciation-for-remarkable-teachers/

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**PEATC Workshops and Events: May 2013**

**Thursday, May 2 - Friday, May 3, 2013** - Specialized Training Of Military Parents (STOMP) Training, Langley, VA

**Saturday, May 4, 2013** - Que Pasa’ Festival of Virginia, 11am - 7pm, 139 Virginia Street, Richmond, VA 23219 (between 14th St & Virginia Street at the Turning Basin). For more information, contact info@vahce.com

**Saturday, May 4, 2013** - Children’s Festival of Friends, 10am-5pm, Newport News Park, Newport News, VA

**Wednesday, May 8, 2013** - "ABC’s of Behavior Workshop in Spanish", Endependence Center, Norfolk, VA

**Saturday, May 18, 2013** - Virginia Family Network: Family and Youth Leadership Summit, 10am-4pm (registration starts at 9am), Crowne Plaza, Downtown Richmond, 555 E. Canal Street, Richmond, VA 23219. For more information, contact Melissa Hammond 804-285-8264 ext. 209 or mhammond@namivirginia.org

**Wednesday, May 29, 2013** - "ABC’s of Behavior Workshop in Spanish", Falls Church, VA
May is the month to show some Teacher Appreciation!

Gift of Gratitude: 10 Ways to Show Teachers Your Appreciation

Teacher Appreciation Week has become an annual event in many schools around the world. Countless teachers, coaches, and aides can be a great help and inspiration to our children throughout the day as well as in the after-school hours. It's our obligation to show them how much their effort and patience means to us.

1. Send out a press release: Press releases are simple and free. Write up a letter from the class or school and send it to the press for all the community to see. Send a picture of the teacher or of the teacher with his or her students with the press release.

2. Prepare a meal: Take turns with some other parents bringing in breakfast or lunch for the teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week.

3. Send a note of gratitude: Think about your favorite attributes of this special teacher and write your thoughts down for her to enjoy. Teachers appreciate your words of support. Site specific ways that they have helped your children or family. You might think that "everyone" will send a note of appreciation but many won't. Be the person who provides a heartfelt thanks to a favorite teacher. On a strict budget? Send a free e-card or have your child color a construction-paper card from scratch!

4. Give a gift certificate to a favorite restaurant: Sometime during the month ask your teacher's friend about which restaurant is a top-pick or ask the teacher where s/he might suggest you take your spouse to lunch or dinner over the weekend. A gift certificate to a meal you know they'll enjoy will be a great gift for any teacher!

5. Present them with a gift certificate for a spa service: Many teachers don't take the time to pamper themselves. Give them the gift of relaxation as a real treat!

6. Personalize t-shirts or coffee mugs: Snap a photo of the class or have the kids make a special class collage. Get it transferred onto a mug, shirt, or book bag so she'll always have it to enjoy!

7. Picture it: Take a picture of the class and put it into a special picture frame for the teacher to hang up in the classroom or keep in her home office. You can even personalize the picture frame with the teacher's name, the grade, and the year with a little engraved brass tag or ask an artistic friend to paint it right onto frame.

8. Before of after-class surprise: Bring in home-made cookies, a personalized cake, or a few pizzas so that your favorite teachers can enjoy a well-deserved treat.

9. Walk of fame: You can get creative—buy a remnant of red carpet, roll of red felt, or paint a roll of butcher paper red and tape it to the floor of the center hallway at the school or facility. Make gold stars with each teacher's name on one. Ask the students, administrators, parents, and staff to greet these special teachers as they enter the school. Then make the teachers feel extra special—take pictures for posterity (with the students!) and celebrate!

10. Have a give-back day: The best way to show gratitude is to give back! Help clean the school, paint, and wash the windows! Raise money for the teachers' favorite charity. Plant a tree or some flowers! Donate some books to the library in their honor! Refill their supply closet! There are many things you can do to give back to the people who've helped your family all year long.

Anyway you do it, the important thing is that you show and tell the teachers and coaches in your child's life that they're making a positive difference in the lives of others. So many of these amazing role models are under-appreciated and under-praised. Today is a great day to tell them how much they mean to us.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Dr. Robyn Silverman
Child development expert, Dr. Robyn Silverman, is the creator of Powerful Words Character Development, a character education program for children. For more information, visit her blog at http://www.DrRobynsBlog.com

ARTICLE SOURCE:

Special Apps for Special Needs

In the spirit of Teacher Appreciation, this month’s "Special Apps" section will feature apps geared towards teachers. The majority of these recommended apps come from fellow teachers and other educator-centric resources. Thank You, Teachers!

TCEA (Texas Computer Education Association) - Free Must-Have iPad Apps for Teachers

Scholastic Inc. - My 35 Favorite Free Apps for Teaching

simplekl2.com - 20 Free iPad Apps Educators Can’t Live Without!
http://files.simplekl2.com/workbooks/iPad_ebook_FINAL.pdf

Free Technology for Teachers - Six Weeks of iPad Apps for School
http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2013/01/six-weeks-of-ipad-apps-for-school-or-46.html#UXaj8KG2So

www.edutopia.org - Top Five iPad Apps for Teaching Across All Content Areas
http://www.edutopia.org/blog/ipad-apps-all-content-areas-andrew-marcinek

appadvice.com - Apps For Teachers
http://appadvice.com/applists/show/apps-for-teachers

Educational Technology and Mobile Learning - Teachers iPad Apps
Great Teachers Harness the Energy of Students


Editorial Note: During this year’s Teacher Appreciation Week, 50 of ED’s senior officials and career staff went “Back to School.” Each staff member was matched with a classroom teacher and spent a full or half day experiencing the life of a teacher. ED’s Dennis Bega shadowed 10th and 11th grade teacher Lisa Clarke in Kent, Wash. Last week, Clarke was named as a 2012/13 Teacher Ambassador Fellow at the Department of Education.

"If the country ran on the energy of high school students, we would never run out."

The goal of every teacher is to harness and channel this energy into an enjoyment of learning—but learning in a way that engages students almost before they know it’s happened. Like all great teachers, Lisa Clarke knows how to do this. In her 10th and 11th grade history and social studies classes at Kent-Meridian High School, students thrive. They plug in and contribute to their learning and achievement. This is not magic; it’s motivation—working with kids where they are. Clarke’s students say she “…just gets us. Ms. Clarke relates to us without giving in to us. She makes learning cool and we want to do our best.” Said another, “Ms. Clarke is focused but flexible.”

Clarke’s classrooms are electric with student participation, small group discussions—a constant learning commotion that brings students into the center of the subject and lets them own the material. Students come to the class early and stay until the last possible second when they race off to the next class before the bell—actually the music—stops. Then they come back again. The room is ALWAYS busy with students.

Kent-Meridian is multicultural, multi-lingual, and multi-racial. Each class has a cross section of students from all around the world, bringing with them their accents, biases, learning styles and issues—plenty of issues. One teacher called the school “…a mini UN, with all the possibilities and problems.”

Eighty percent of the school’s 1,937 student body receives free and reduced lunch. It is a challenging environment for teaching and learning to high standards and expectations. Yet here is where Clarke has chosen to be. Described by her colleagues as “the definition of a world class teacher,” Clarke arrives at school by 7:15 am and stays until after all the kids have gone home. And she didn’t start out to be a teacher. Her first love was human rights advocacy. But, in her words “I found myself drawn to teaching when I discovered I wanted to spend more time talking education with the interns than I did doing the policy work.” This second career has led her to teaching posts from one end of the country to the other.

Part of Clarke’s success is that she’s surrounded by caring and committed teaching colleagues all of whom have formed various Content Learning Teams and a robust Professional Learning Community that supports good instruction and the exchange of innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

Shadowing Clarke during Teacher Appreciation Week was a powerful experience. Being a witness to an outstanding example of teaching and seeing those intangibles of instructional excellence reaffirms why this work matters. But students may have said it best when, in a small group, they offered, “It might be Teacher Appreciation Week, but we appreciate Ms. Clarke every day of the year.”

—Dennis Bega is Deputy Director of Regional Communications and Outreach based in ED’s Atlanta Regional Office.

LATINO CORNER

Happy Teacher Appreciation Week, May 14 - 18

Before May ends, we just wanted to say “Thank You” to all the teachers and professors out there for all you do. We truly appreciate everything you do to inspire student creativity and innovation!

Partnering with teachers

As a partner with the teachers in your child’s life, offer the same respect and consideration that you expect from them. Remember to let the school staff members know when they are doing a good job. Nothing means more to a teacher than a brief handwritten thank you note from a family. When mistakes are made, try to resolve them quickly and completely. Then wipe the slate clean and move forward. Your goal is to direct the energy in your partnership toward the successful education of your child.

La semana de apreciación para las maestros/maestras y profesor es 14 - 18 de mayo

Antes de finales del mayo, queríamos decir “Gracias” a todos los maestros/maestras y profesores por todos lo que hacen. ¡Realmente apreciamos todo lo que hacen para inspirar la innovación y la creatividad del estudiante!

Colaborando con los maestros

Como socio con los maestros en la vida de su hijo, ofrezca el mismo respeto y consideración que usted espera de ellos. Acuérdate de avisar al personal de la escuela cuando están haciendo un buen trabajo. Nada significa mucho más para un maestro o maestra que una breve nota de agradecimiento escrita a mano de una familia. Cuando se cometen errores, trate de resolverlos rápidamente y completamente. Solucione el problema y siga adelante. Su objetivo es dirigir la energía de su colaboración hacia la educación exitosa de su hijo.

Excerpt from PEATC’s “Partnerships” Factsheet: http://www.peatc.org/filelist/article_view.cgi?filelist_id=237