



May 18, 2016

Dr. Aaron Spence
Virginia Beach City Public Schools
PO Box 6038
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Re: New Virginia Statute Requiring School Boards to Provide Reasonable Access to Boy and Girl Scouts

Dear Dr. Spence,

We would like to take this opportunity to make you aware of House Bill 942 which was passed by Virginia legislators and signed by Governor McAuliffe to become new law effective July 1, 2016, which states local school boards shall provide reasonable and appropriate access to school property to youth-oriented, community organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts of the USA, and their volunteers and staff, to distribute and provide instructional materials in order to encourage participation in such organizations and their activities. Such access may include after school sponsored activities such as 'Back to School' events, where it can be reasonably accommodated and shall not conflict with instructional time.

We are anxious to partner with the schools and communicate to students and their families the benefits that can be found in Scouting. There may be many ways this can be done, including opportunities before and after school as well as during the lunch periods. Our goal is to work with the schools and to find the best way to communicate to their students and parents for our purposes.

As representatives of the area Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting our organizations' efforts and the commonly shared values we represent. The support we receive from community partners, such as our area school systems, is vital and allows us to continue offering programs so desperately needed by today's youth. Thanks to the help of our partners and volunteers, youth who are able to participate in Scouting develop valuable life and leadership skills and are more apt to address personal issues—cyber safety, bullying, self-image, and are given opportunities to explore topics like the environment, technology and community service.

The programs provided by the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of this area are tremendous supplement to the education you and your team work hard to provide. The overlap with the Standards of Learning provides a critical reinforcing effect between school and Scouting. Our clear mission is to help young people grow and not to interfere with school instruction.

We hope you agree, there are ways to communicate these opportunities to students before school, after school, at lunch, or at Back to School nights we are organizing for this fall. As parents ourselves, we are certain that it is easy to reasonably accommodate volunteers providing information in all these times in accordance with this new law.

We will be in touch in the next few weeks to schedule a time for either us or a representative from our leadership to meet with you and answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Tracy Keller
Chief Executive Officer
Girl Scouts of the Colonial Coast

John Scheib
Vice President Membership
Tidewater Council, BSA