



News Release

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**FIRST LADY DOROTHY MCAULIFFE VISITS WITH STUDENTS AT
THE STATE LABORATORY AS THEY LEARN ABOUT SCIENCE
~ Virginia's Department of General Services Celebrates National Laboratory Week ~**

Richmond, VA – Today, First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe and Nancy Rodrigues, Secretary of Administration visited with students and toured Virginia's public health and environmental laboratory.

To celebrate National Laboratory Week, the Department of General Services – Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS), invited students to spend the day at the lab learning about science and the many ways the state laboratory works to benefit the lives of the citizens of the Commonwealth. Twelve students from the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School for Marine and Environmental Science and six students from the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School joined the First Lady and Secretary Rodrigues for a tour and a chance to perform lab experiments. After a 40-minute tour they went to the DCLS Training Lab to assist in conducting two of four lab experiments, such as extracting DNA from fruit to identifying different bacterial species based on their biochemical properties.

“It was an honor for me to join such bright students to celebrate National Laboratory Week,” said Mrs. McAuliffe. “Science and technology education is so important for preparing Virginia students for successful futures, and it was excellent to see that in action this morning. And let's not forget that today is also Earth Day. One of our experiments highlighted the importance of conservation, preventing pollution, and what our labs do to help protect the environment. Not only was this a unique opportunity for these students to get excited about science, but also a chance to see its application in the real-world and the important work that our laboratory

professionals do to keep the Commonwealth healthy and safe.”

Annually, DCLS performs more than 7 million laboratory tests which include identifying genetic and metabolic disorders in newborn children; and detecting infectious agents and toxic chemicals in humans, animals, soil, the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink. Each year, DCLS trains over 5,000 scientists, certifies nearly 100 laboratories, and prepares and distributes over 300,000 test collection kits across the state.

“This is a real-world opportunity for these students and I am thrilled to be a part of it and see these young people get excited about science,” said Nancy Rodrigues, Secretary of Administration. “Also, today and all this week is a time to highlight what our laboratory professionals do every day. From testing for metabolic disorders in more than 100,000 newborns each year to testing for toxic chemicals - - - what takes place in this lab affects the lives of all Virginians.”

Each year DCLS celebrates National Laboratory Week, which recognizes laboratory professionals who play a vital role in every aspect of health care. DCLS works behind the scenes daily to provide services that help protect and improve the health of each and every citizen within the Commonwealth. This year National Laboratory Week is April 20th – April 26th.

For more information about the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services, Virginia’s public health and environmental laboratory, go to www.DGS.virginia.gov.

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