



April 2025

Dear Virginia Educators and Community Members:

In June 2026, Norfolk, Hampton Roads, and Virginia's Chesapeake Bay region will welcome an international fleet of tall ships, military vessels, and character ships to commemorate America's 250th anniversary. This milestone event, **Sail250® Virginia**, will include more than 60 ships from 20 countries, bringing 7,000 visiting sailors, officers, and dignitaries to Virginia's shores.

Sail250® Virginia events are planned to promote goodwill among nations, inspire patriotism and foster interest in American maritime history and heritage. In the tradition of the past five iconic OpSail® maritime festivals held in Virginia since 1976, the international Sail250® Virginia fleet will once again bring extraordinary experiences and opportunities to every corner of our communities, including our Virginia schools, youth organizations and community programs.

As we approach the one-year countdown America's 250th anniversary, we invite all Virginia educators to take advantage of our Sail250® Virginia education program which includes three elements – our very successful Adopt-A-Ship program, a collection of online maritime resources, and suggested maritime themed classroom projects.

The Sail250® Virginia **Adopt-A-Ship** program allows students to serve as “ambassadors” to the international fleet. Each Adopt-A-Ship school will be paired with one of the visiting ships to learn about the ship's history, the culture of its home country, and eventually, to correspond with its crew as they sail to Virginia in 2026! Transportation grants will be available to participating schools helping to offset the cost for those schools to visit Norfolk for the June 2026 events. Please see the [downloadable PDF](#) on our [HISTORY/EDUCATION webpage](#) for more information about the Adopt-A-Ship program and how to get involved.

A Sail250® Virginia [online resource collection](#) focuses on our country's maritime heritage and includes histories, personal narratives, and links to lesson plans developed by museums from across the country. Educators can integrate this information into their history, language studies, geography, art, and music curriculum using the Sail250® Virginia [suggested classroom projects](#).

If you are interested in involving your school in our Adopt-A-Ship program, please complete the attached **Adopt-A-Ship Interest Form** and return via email to me at CookP@festevents.org.

We will continue to update resources and provide the latest information about the June 2026 events and activities through our webpage www.Sail250Virginia.com.

Thank you for your important work in educating Virginia's youth!

With warm regards,

Paula Barclay Cook
Education Manager
Sail250® Virginia
cookp@festevents.org
120 West Main St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
C: 757-793-0551



**Sail250® Virginia Education Program
ADOPT-A-SHIP Interest Form**

Date: _____

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Position/Title: _____

Name of School/Organization: _____

Address: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: VA Zip: _____

Name of School Principal/Director: _____

Phone number of School/Organization: _____

Please check your areas of interest:

_____ Adopt-A-Ship Program

_____ Sail250® Virginia Maritime Resource Collection (Available NOW on website)

_____ Suggested Maritime Themed Classroom Projects (Available NOW on website)

Describe your group (Approx. size, age range, potential activities, etc.):

If you are interested in involving your school/organization or wish to receive more information about the Sail250® Virginia events and activities, please complete this form with your information and return to Paula Cook via email cookp@festevents.org.

Thank you for your important work in educating Virginia's youth!

Sincerely,
Paula Barclay Cook, Education Manager
Sail250® Virginia
120 W. Main Street
Norfolk, VA 23510
cookp@festevents.org
C: 757-793-0551

Visit our website www.Sail250Virginia.com today!

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