



VSBA

VSBA Special Edition Newsletter

Virginia School Boards Association

Leadership • Advocacy • Support

Spring 2021



SHOWCASES FOR SUCCESS

As a means of encouraging awareness and recognition of public schools, the Virginia School Boards Association invited Virginia's school divisions to recommend programs that would serve as "Showcases for Success" in public education. The VSBA has created an online database of these successful programs and will feature them on the VSBA web site for the entire year. In addition, this directory will be shared with journalists, school board members, superintendents, legislators, and top state officials. The focus of the 2021 VSBA Showcases for Success is Unprecedented Times, Innovation Climbs, highlighting the unique and innovative ways in which divisions responded to the events of the last

year to continue to meet the needs of students and families.

Readers are invited to visit the directory of programs, which is now available on the VSBA web site. We also would like to encourage an exchange of ideas and initiatives. The directory highlights division-wide programs, as well as those at elementary, middle, and high school levels. The quality and range of initiatives is vast and remarkable, and divisions are encouraged to use these "Showcases for Success" as a starting point to develop similar programs in their school division. With an open exchange of ideas and implementation of best practices, together we can work toward the ultimate goal of graduation and success for all students.

SHOWCASE DIRECTORY

vsba.org/showcases



Sponsored by: **AMERICAN FIDELITY** a different opinion

With an open exchange of ideas and implementation of best practices, together we can work toward the ultimate goal of graduation and success for all students.

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Augusta County	Fairfax City	King & Queen County	Montgomery County	Stafford County
Bedford County	Fairfax County	King William County	Newport News City	Tazewell County
Bristol City	Franklin City	Loudoun County	Petersburg City	Virginia Beach City
Caroline County	Franklin County	Louisa County	Portsmouth City	Waynesboro City
Carroll County	Fredericksburg City	Lynchburg City	Powhatan County	Williamsburg-James City County
Chesapeake City	Goochland County	Maggie Walker Governor's School	Prince Edward County	Winchester City
Chesterfield County	Hampton City	Mathews County	Prince William County	
Cumberland County	Hanover County	Mecklenburg County	Radford City	
Dinwiddie County	Henry County	Middlesex County	Shenandoah County	
Essex County	Hopewell City		Spotsylvania County	

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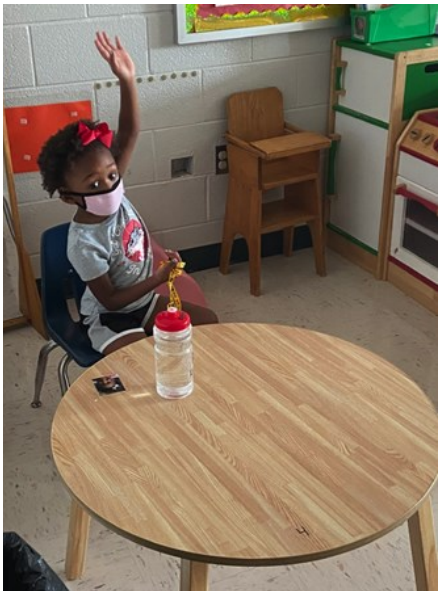


DIVISION:
Augusta County Public Schools

PROGRAM:
PRESCHOOL IN A PANDEMIC

To ensure that the quality of our fully inclusive preschool experience is not only maintained but enhanced during the 2020-2021 pandemic, Safety mitigation strategies were put into place, and innovation became the main focus. Students in Augusta County preschool enjoy in-person preschool in classrooms with reimagined room arrangements that allow for child choice and quality interactions. One strategy is the “own zone” in which students have a designated spot of their “own” for meals, rest, and access to materials that do not have to be shared. This is an enhancement that ACPS will likely maintain post-pandemic. Team collaboration produced high quality virtual learning plans as well as developmentally appropriate snow day plans that facilitate child and family interactions and meaningful experiences during time that must be spent learning from home. Parent outreach was redesigned and strengthened through non-traditional formats such as virtual conferences, recorded presentations, and individual parent visits to the classroom. This comprehensive experience sets students up for success and builds a love of learning during a pandemic!

CONTACT: Kaitie Saunders, PK Supervisor, 540-245-5140



DIVISION:
Bedford County Public Schools

PROGRAM:
LEARNING COACHES FOR HYBRID INSTRUCTION

The Bedford County Public Schools blended learning model in grades 7 - 12 was a combination of virtual and face to face instruction. This model required each learner to initially attend two days in a cohort with an additional flex day offered for students when needed. The unique element of BCPS blended learning model is that each student cohort had a Learning Coach who served in an advisory role. The Learning Coach was the primary way for the learner and parent/guardian to navigate school. Learning Coaches developed stronger student relationships in the cohort using a social-emotional learning curriculum. Coaches also assisted students with scheduling meetings with teachers individually or in small groups. Learning coaches monitored student progress, created a classroom community, provided instructional support, and facilitated the use of Canvas. Students have excelled academically because of the level of social emotional support that has been provided by this model.”

CONTACT: LeeAnn Calvert, Director of Recruitment and Retention, 434-546-0029



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DIVISION:

Carroll County Public Schools

PROGRAM:

CAVALIERS CONNECTED

Carroll County Public Schools created the "Cavaliers Connected" program to offer a free, 100% virtual option for students who are unable to attend in person. Specific teachers at each level are designated Cavaliers Connected teachers; this ensures that our virtual students receive the attention they deserve, while also removing the burden of virtual instruction from the great majority of in-person teachers. Cavaliers Connected teachers utilize a flexible schedule to ensure students can receive instruction at a time and place that fits their needs, while offering live office hours and small group sessions to provide individualized attention. Furthermore, we are piloting the Schoology LMS to ensure students and parents know four key principles: what to do, when to do it, how to receive help, and how well they performed. These factors have made Cavaliers Connected a success in ensuring that students are receiving the quality of education they deserve.

CONTACT: Ryan Newberry,
Cavaliers Connected
Administrator, 276-782-9055

DIVISION:

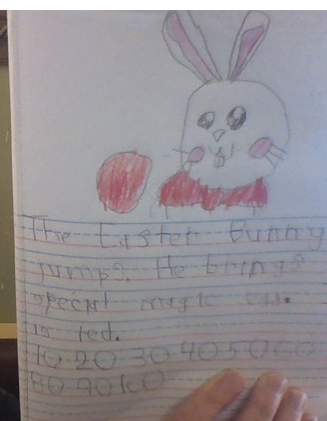
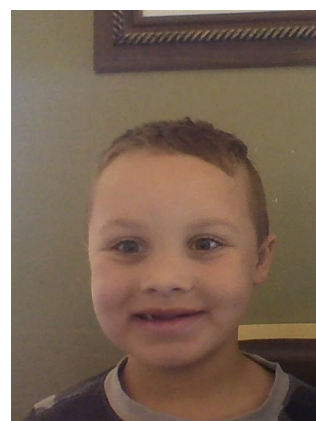
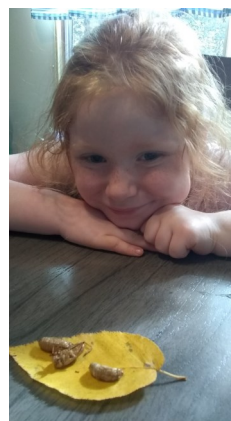
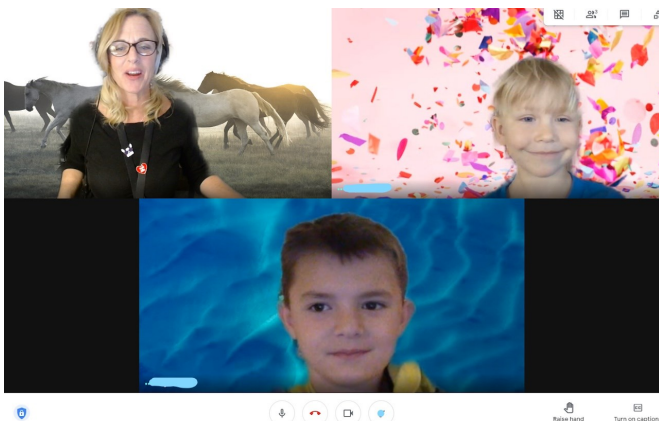
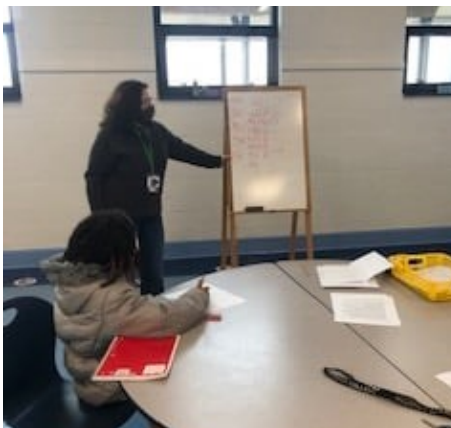
Franklin County Public Schools

PROGRAM:

SATURDAY CAFE

The brainstorm of Saturday Cafe came about due to the learning loss incurred by students since last March and the limited access to the internet many families face. The division wanted students to be able to access the internet and receive small group or individual instruction at each school on Saturday mornings. Many parents in the county have difficulty accessing the internet thus creating an equity issue. Improving student achievement is a priority for our division, thus, Saturday Cafe gives students the opportunity to engage in reteaching of skills they may have not yet mastered. In addition, parents and the community have the opportunity to access the internet and obtain academic support in any needed areas in which to support their students. We have found this opportunity has supported students in receiving what they need to be academically successful in their classes while serving a community need for internet access.

CONTACT: Brenda Muse,
Director of Curriculum &
Instruction, 540-483-5138



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DIVISION:
Goochland County Public Schools

PROGRAM:
CAPES FROM COACHES

In a normal school year our students see teachers for the heroes they are. This year teachers everywhere have transformed into superheroes and Goochland is no different. Each month the GCPS coaching team is highlighting different Goochland superhero teachers through Twitter for taking risks in their classrooms and helping to #MaximizeGCPS. The tweets include a description of why each teacher is being highlighted as well as a gif of each teacher decked out in their new superhero cape. We are hoping to not only celebrate risk taking and innovation with students, but to inspire all of our superhero teachers to continue to innovate in their classrooms during these unprecedented times.

CONTACT: Matt Caratachea, Coordinator of Technology Integration & Innovation, 804-615-0053



DIVISION:
Louisa County Public Schools

PROGRAM:
THE 5 CS INNOVATION GRANTS GIVEAWAY PROGRAM

Launched in February 2020, Louisa County Public Schools has brought back its "5 Cs Innovation Grants" program! For the 2020-2021 school year! Through this program, the school division passes out \$25,000 worth of grants to teachers at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The grants are given to help fund unique educational projects designed by teachers to encourage students to develop The 5 C's of Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, Critical Thinking, and Citizenship! The program has been made possible thanks to the Louisa County School Board, which set aside \$25,000 at the beginning of the last two school years to specifically be used to fund innovation in the classroom. All LCPS staff members are able to apply for an Innovation Grant, and a panel featuring representatives from all six schools selects the top applications based on a 5 Cs rubric. Teachers who receive grants receive the news via a surprise visit to their classroom by LCPS Superintendent Doug Straley, the Louisa County School Board, and school administrators!

CONTACT: Andrew Woolfolk, Public Information Officer, 540-872-1080



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DIVISION:

Mathews County Public Schools

PROGRAM:

GRADING FOR EQUITY IN VIRTUAL AND HYBRID LEARNING FORMATS

To meet the challenges of virtual learning and the social and emotional needs of all students, the following procedures were implemented: Assignments submitted within three weeks of the due date are accepted for full credit. Teachers may deduct up to 30% on work received after six weeks late, but is not recommended. The number of assignments for students must not exceed 17 per quarter per course. Students should have a maximum of 60 minutes per week of work. To provide all students with the opportunity to succeed during this difficult time, the minimum grade on all assignments is 50%. Research suggests that grading practices that are motivational in nature rather than punitive can reduce gaps, improve learning for all students, and become a lever for creating stronger teacher-student relationships and more caring classrooms (Feldman, 2018). We achieved a significant drop in student failure due to the implementation of this procedure.

CONTACT: Dr. Andrew

Greve, Principal, 804-725-3702

DIVISION:

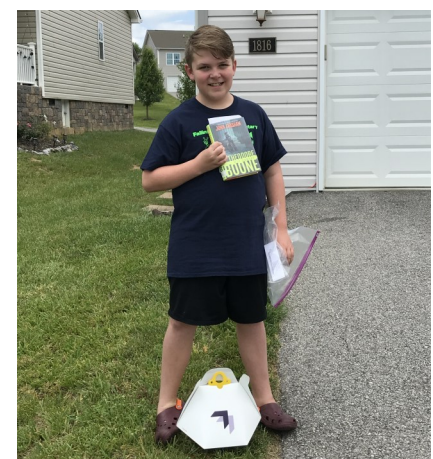
Montgomery County Public Schools

PROGRAM:

LIBRARY BOOK DELIVERY USING DRONES

Montgomery County Public Schools is delivering library books to our students using drones! In order to provide students with books for independent reading when they do not have physical access to their School Library, we have partnered with Wing, a sister company of Google, to provide the drone technology to deliver books. As Wing is the only company with FAA approval to use drones for residential deliveries, MCPS is the first and only school system in the world to employ this technology to reach our students! When our school system moved to fully remote learning at the start of the pandemic, it became vitally important to find a way to continue to provide our students with access to books, as research shows independent reading positively correlates with student success. MCPS and Wing have committed to continue to provide this service to our students as a regular offering.

CONTACT: Carl Pauli, Director of Secondary Education and Fine Arts, 540-382-5100 x 1043



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DIVISION:
Newport News City Public Schools

PROGRAM:
**WORK-BASED LEARNING
AND WORKPLACE
READINESS VIRTUAL
LEARNING INITIATIVES**

Newport News Public Schools' mission is to ensure that all students graduate college, career and citizen-ready. Our high school cooperative education (COOP) coordinators displayed their innovation and creativity as they faced pandemic restrictions with providing in-person activities. The coordinators developed educational resources based on student interest. Three interactive Canvas modules were developed that focused on Workplace Readiness Skills, Employability Skills and Work-Based Learning. These resources were shared with over 11,000 middle and high school CTE students. The workplace readiness/employability skill modules focused on the needs of employers to better prepare students to enter the workforce and be successful in their chosen career. The work-based learning models reinforced Virginia's 5 C's—critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creative thinking, and citizenship—by allowing students to apply these skills in a real-world setting. As evidenced by completion of learning modules and capstone projects, student employability skills and career preparedness have increased.

CONTACT: Toinette Outland, CTE
Instructional Supervisor, 757-594-6395

DIVISION:
Portsmouth City Public Schools

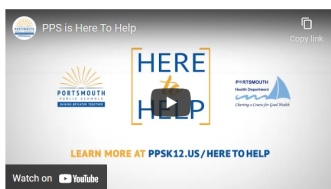
PROGRAM:
HERE TO HELP

Since the mandated closing of schools in March of 2020, the school division's Offices of School Psychology and School Counseling compiled lists of mental health resources for staff and families to access on the division's website. In January 2021, the "Here to Help" webpage was updated and redesigned to provide even more digital resources as well as information on where families in need could receive one-on-one support. On the Here to Help webpage, families can find guides on how to have conversations at home in dealing with feelings of isolation, anxiety or depression. They also can learn more about how to connect with mental health professionals. For example, when schools were not back to in-person instruction, school counselors continued to be available for sessions with students who needed to talk to someone. Visitation to this webpage grew by 1,000 percent from March 2020 to March 2021.

CONTACT: Lauren Nolasco,
Director of Communications,
757-393-8743



In Portsmouth Public Schools (PPS), the social-emotional needs of the division's students and staff are crucial priorities in running today's schools and classrooms. With the COVID-19 global pandemic controlling the day-to-day lives of families, students and school colleagues, it is understandable that one another's mental health can also be greatly impacted.



Throughout the pandemic, staff in the division's Office of School Psychology has built a library of resources to help families who may be struggling with feelings of isolation, anxiety or depression. Additionally, PPS continues to offer its school counseling teams to assist students and families as well as its Employee Assistance Program for staff members.

Learn more about these resources below, and remember: PPS is Here to Help.



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DIVISION:

Prince Edward County Public Schools

PROGRAM:

INNOVATIVE VIRTUAL BAND & MUSIC

The PECHS Band program has embraced virtual learning. Students studied the origins of music, creation of instruments, influence of the printing press on music notation, different cultures, and influential composers. Students celebrated Black History Month and Women's History Month by researching and creating celebratory posters about the lives and achievements of those in the music industry. Students spent time exploring Electronic Music and were tasked with using an online program to mix their own songs. While experimenting with a virtual sound studio, students were responsible for layering together multiple sound samples including drums, piano, guitar, create their own track. This project allowed students to learn more about tempo, matching key signatures, and music

DIVISION:

Spotsylvania County Public Schools

PROGRAM:

VIRTUAL DEBATE LEAGUE

Spotsylvania County Public Schools middle school students made history this year by inaugurating a virtual debate tournament. The virtual tournament was organized through the Spotsylvania County Middle School Debate League, Stephen O'Baugh of Rockingham County Schools, and the National Speech and Debate Association. All seven county middle schools participated with a total of 25 two-person teams competing against each other on the topic 'Resolved: Online-Distance learning is a superior way of learning than in-class instruction.' The virtual debate format was public-forum debate with 2-person pro and con teams paired against each other in three rounds of debate. Teams debated each other in virtual rooms using Tabroom.com. The final school results were: 1st - Spotsylvania Middle; 2nd - Thornburg Middle; and 3rd - Chancellor Middle. The future of virtual debate looks very promising as the Spotsylvania County Middle Debate League is coordinating future virtual tournaments with the Richmond Debate Institute and Richmond Middle School Debate League.

CONTACT: Scott Miller, Debate Coach, 540-898-4445 x2244



Ella Cox

1st Place - Spotsylvania Middle School PRO Team
(3-0) 87 pts Coach: Alicia Gallaway



Jordane Donfack

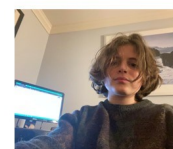


Olivia Caesar

2nd Place - Thornburg Middle School PRO Team
(3-0) 84 pts Coach: Katherine Deskins

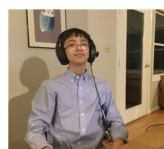


Ellie Shoaf



Luke Barbieri

3rd Place - Chancellor Middle School CON Team
(3-0) 81 pts Coach: Justin Thomen



Andrew Min



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Virginia School Boards Association, a voluntary, nonpartisan organization of Virginia school boards, promotes excellence in public education through leadership, advocacy and services.

VISION STATEMENT

VSBA is recognized and respected as an innovative leader in public education.