



VSBA

Virginia School Boards Association

Leadership · Advocacy · Support

2024 Workforce Readiness Month Toolkit



Participation in VSBA initiatives and observances is optional. School boards in Virginia have the discretion on whether to participate locally. Any related materials from the Association are shared as suggested ideas for implementation for any member board that may choose to do so.

www.vsba.org | 434-295-8722 | 800-446-8722

April 2024 – VSBA Workforce Readiness Month

Dear School Board Member/Superintendent:

To promote the need to identify workforce development opportunities that enable students to be prepared to succeed in the economy, VSBA has designated the month of April as VSBA Workforce Readiness Month, with April 16, 2024, designated as Workforce Readiness Day in Virginia.

The VSBA Task Force on Workforce Readiness was established by the VSBA Board of Directors in 2015 to study how career and technical education programs are being implemented in Virginia school divisions and how these programs are preparing the state's future workforce.

The Task Force has been vital in providing federal, state and local school boards with best practices for developing and expanding Career & Technical Education (CTE) as well as workforce readiness programs that offer training on skill sets that will allow students to be globally competitive. It is also critical that we collaborate with the business industry and the community college system to ensure that students have early access and opportunity to participate in workforce readiness programs.

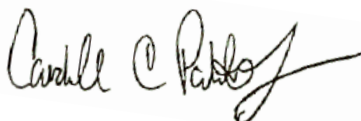
VSBA will publicize Workforce Readiness Month in our newsletter, on the VSBA website, and through social media. School divisions are encouraged to issue their own news releases, and it would be helpful if divisions would apprise the VSBA of any related activities taking place in their division. Potential activities could include:

- Adopt a proclamation similar to the one adopted by the VSBA Board of Directors (see enclosed).
- Write a letter to the editor or contact a local reporter to see if they will do a story about workforce readiness or CTE initiatives taking place in the division.
- Host an event on Workforce Readiness Day.
- Hold school or division student contests (poster, video, writing, etc.) around the importance of workforce readiness programs in preparing students beyond graduation.
- Highlight workforce readiness and/or CTE programs and partnerships on your division's website and/or social media channels throughout the month.
- Recognize your division's CTE staff and/or workforce readiness business partners at a school board meeting during April.
- Conduct workforce readiness workshops with business and community college partners, highlighting existing programs currently offered in the school division.

This guide includes several resources to assist you in these efforts, including references to the Task Force's five goals, a sample news release, and a proclamation adopted by the VSBA Board of Directors.

We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to spread awareness, examine and discuss strategies, and review current trends and best practices related to workforce development that will positively impact the educational outcomes for all students.

Sincerely,



Dr. Cardell Patillo
VSBA President



Gina G. Patterson
Executive Director

Key Goals & Findings

In October/November 2015, the Task Force conducted a statewide survey of public school divisions to gather information on Career & Technical Education (CTE) across the Commonwealth. From this survey, the following five goals were developed for the Task Force:

- Funding Innovation and Workforce Development (Pre-K-12)
- Addressing the CTE teacher shortage
- Survey Superintendents
- Identify and promote replication of best practices in the Commonwealth
- Promoting career education and workforce development

On January 18, 2016, Task Force Co-Chair, Bill Kidd (former school board member, Wythe County) and Dr. Tom Brewster (former superintendent, Pulaski County) presented the Task Force findings to the House Education Committee (full details of this visit are available in the January 18, 2016, posting on the VSBA Legislative Update Blog):

- Increased funding is needed to sustain current programs, develop new programs, update equipment and resources, and obtain the highest quality instructors.
- There is a need for greater collaboration between business/industry leaders and CTE.
- The ability to employ the most qualified personnel for CTE instruction is an ongoing issue.
- Increased collaboration with business and industry, the community college system, and the core school setting is necessary.
- The impact of scheduling, graduation requirements, and SOL demands significantly affects a student's availability to be enrolled in CTE programs.
- We should explore virtual learning and distance learning option in order to expand workforce training opportunities throughout the Commonwealth.
- The need for earlier introduction of career education and options is necessary for both students and families.
- Enhance the integration of essential employment skills or soft skills and ethics throughout our K-12 classrooms.

To address the urgency of filling these positions, both college and career readiness must be central to the mission of our K-12 schools. The demand for highly skilled jobs over the next decade in Virginia will continue to increase. These jobs can be filled by qualified public school students.

VSBA Board of Directors Proclamation

WHEREAS, workforce readiness is essential to developing skill sets for students in Virginia's public schools to be successful beyond high school graduation; and

WHEREAS, the demand for highly skilled jobs over the next decade in Virginia will continue to increase and can be filled by qualified public schools students; and

WHEREAS, we recognize increased collaboration with business and industry, the community college system, and the core school setting is necessary; and

WHEREAS, the promise of public education is for every child to be successful in school and life; and

WHEREAS, it is important for Virginia families, students, teachers, and school administrators to be actively engaged in supporting the importance of workforce readiness as part of the educational experience; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that limited funding, resources, facilities, partnerships, and qualified CTE staff impedes student access to workforce readiness opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the VSBA has established a Task Force on Workforce Readiness to make recommendations and to stay at the forefront of these discussions in Virginia Schools; and

Now, **THEREFORE**, be it Resolved, the Virginia School Boards Association recognizes the month of April 2024 as VSBA Workforce Readiness Month and April 16, 2024, as VSBA Workforce Readiness Day, with the intention to advocate and increase awareness about the supports necessary to promote workforce development opportunities that enable students to be prepared to succeed in a global economy.

Sample News Release

News Release

For Immediate Release

[DATE]

Contact

[NAME]

[EMAIL, PHONE]

April is Workforce Readiness Month

April 16, 2024 Designated as Workforce Readiness Day

[CITY/COUNTY], VA – School board members, superintendents, teachers, and families can play a critical role in supporting students with obtaining the skill sets necessary to be successful beyond high school graduation. This is why the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) has declared April to be Workforce Readiness Month and April 16, 2024 as Workforce Readiness Day.

Workforce readiness and Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs can give students the training needed to succeed for life. Additionally, these programs help students understand what their learning applies to the needs of employers. Regardless of whether students are headed directly to college or the workforce, this type of education will prepare them for the future.

The demand for highly skilled jobs over the next decade in Virginia continues to increase. These jobs can be filled by qualified public school students. [INSERT SCHOOL DIVISION NAME] is committed to offering workforce development opportunities that will enable students to be successful and globally competitive. The school division currently offers our partners [INSERT CTE OR WORKFORCE READINESS PROGRAMS, BUSINESS AND/OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS].

[INSERT QUOTE FROM BOARD MEMBER AND/OR SUPERINTENDENT]

Local activities include [INSERT LIST OF ACTIVITIES]

About the Virginia School Boards Association

The Virginia School Boards Association, a voluntary, nonpartisan organization of Virginia school boards, promotes excellence in public education through advocacy, training and services. The Association offers conferences, information, training, and counseling designed to meet the needs of the Commonwealth's educational leaders.