



VSBA

Virginia School Boards Association

Leadership · Advocacy · Support

2025 Workforce Readiness Month Toolkit



Photo Courtesy of Louisa County Public Schools

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 2025 – VSBA Workforce Readiness

Dear School Board Member/Superintendent:

To emphasize the importance of workforce readiness opportunities that prepare students for success in today's economy, the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) has designated April as **VSBA Workforce Readiness Month**, with **April 16, 2025, recognized 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 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 to collaborate with the businesses and community colleges to ensure that students have early access and the opportunity to participate in workforce readiness programs. In September of 2024 the VSBA Task Force was moved to be a subcommittee for the Task Force on Students and Schools in Challenging Environments.

VSBA will promote Workforce Readiness Month through our newsletter, website, and social media. We encourage school divisions to issue their own news releases and share any related activities with VSBA. Suggested activities include:

- **Adopt of proclamation** similar to the one passed by the VSBA Board of Directors (see enclosed).
- **Engage local media** by writing a letter to the editor or inviting reporters to cover workforce readiness or CTE initiatives in your division.
- **Host an event** on Workforce Readiness Day (April 16, 2025).
- **Organize student contests** (poster, video, writing, etc.) highlighting the importance of workforce readiness throughout the month.
- **Showcase CTE and workforce readiness programs** on your division's website and social media throughout the month.
- **Recognize CTE educators and business partners** at a school board meeting in April.
- **Conduct workforce readiness workshops** in partnership with businesses and community colleges to highlight existing programs.

This guide includes a variety of resources to support these efforts, including the Task Force's five key goals, VSBA Board of Directors' proclamation, a sample news release, and a sample letter to the editor.

Workforce readiness efforts across Virginia are not just preparing students for future careers – they are creating Champions for Impact. Champions of Impact are the students, educators, business partners, and community members whose lives and communities are transformed through workforce development programs. By equipping students with real-world skills, fostering industry partnerships, and opening doors to career pathways, we are building a future where every student has the opportunity to thrive. We encourage divisions to share their Champions for Impact stories – examples of how workforce readiness programs are making a difference in the lives of students and the broader community. If you would like to submit a Champion for Impact story, be it a short video or written, please do so through this online form:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025ChampionforImpact>. If you have any questions, please contact Bella Corbo at 434-295-8722 ext. 2, or email at bella@vsba.org.

We encourage you to take part in this initiative by raising awareness, exploring new strategies, and reviewing current workforce development trends. Your participation will help shape opportunities that enhance student success beyond graduation.

Sincerely,



Dr. JoWanda Rollins-Fells
VSBA President



Gina G. Patterson
Executive Director

Key Goals & Findings

In Fall 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 affect a student's availability to be enrolled in CTE programs.
- We should explore virtual learning and distance learning options in order to expand workforce training opportunities throughout the Commonwealth.
- The need for earlier introduction of career education and other 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 2025 as VSBA Workforce Readiness Month and April 16, 2025, 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.

News Release

For Immediate Release

[DATE]

Contact

[NAME]

[EMAIL, PHONE]

April is VSBA Workforce Readiness Month

April 16, 2025, 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, 2025, 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 how 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]

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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.

Sample Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

The month of April marks the annual observance of Workforce Readiness Month. As we celebrate this initiative, it is essential to recognize the critical role that our public schools play in preparing students for successful futures. Workforce readiness is not just about career training – it's about equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and experiences they need to thrive in a rapidly evolving economy.

Across [SCHOOL DIVISION NAME], we are committed to ensuring that every student is prepared for life beyond the classroom. Our schools offer robust Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, apprenticeships, internships, and partnerships with local businesses and industries. These opportunities provide students with hands-on learning experiences that connect classroom instruction with real-world applications.

Workforce readiness is a shared responsibility between schools, businesses, and the community. By investing in workforce development initiatives, we are not only setting students up for success but also strengthening our local economy. Employers are looking for skilled, adaptable, and innovative workers – qualities that our students develop through high-quality educational programs.

We encourage our community to join us in celebrating Workforce Readiness Month by supporting local schools, recognizing students' achievements, and advocating for continued investment in workforce development programs. Together, we can ensure that today's students are ready to become tomorrow's leaders, innovators, and workforce professionals.

Sincerely,
[SUPERINTENDENT]
[SCHOOL DIVISION NAME]



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