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## News Release

**For Immediate Release**

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### Three School Divisions Complete VSBA's Fiscal Governance Cohort Program

**Charlottesville, VA** - The Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) has concluded its third annual Fiscal Governance Cohort Program, a dynamic training initiative that brought together school board members and staff from Petersburg City, Prince George County, and Surry County Public Schools.

Led by Dr. Jeff Smith, former Superintendent of Hampton City Schools, and Dr. Michael Thornton, retired Superintendent of Surry County Public Schools, the program featured four intensive sessions focused on aligning school finance, instructional leadership, and governance to improve student outcomes. Through case studies, collaboration, and strategic planning exercises, participants strengthened their leadership skills and gained practical tools to better serve their communities.

"Participating in the VSBA Fiscal Governance Team Cohort was truly rewarding and impactful," said Yolonda Brown, Superintendent of Petersburg City Public Schools. "The program helped sharpen our skills as a leadership team and provided practical tools and strategies to ensure that we are making decisions that align with our division's priorities. This experience allowed us to learn alongside other school divisions, fostered valuable collaboration and gave us new insights we can bring back to best support the students and staff of Petersburg City Public Schools."

The cohort emphasized peer learning, drawing on the diverse experiences of participating divisions and fostering relationships that will continue beyond the training.

VSBA Executive Director Gina Patterson praised the cohort's commitment: "This group exemplified what it means to lead with purpose. Their dedication to strengthening governance and financial stewardship will have a lasting impact on their communities."

The next Fiscal Governance Cohort is scheduled for 2026, and school divisions interested in building stronger governance teams are encouraged to stay tuned.

### About the Virginia School Boards Association

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

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