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News Release

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VSBA Celebrates 40 Years of Innovation and Excellence at the 2025 Conference on Education

Charlottesville, VA – Earlier today, the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) proudly celebrated a major milestone with the 40th Annual Conference on Education. Held in Short Pump, this year's event brought together school board members, superintendents, educators, and partners in education from across the Commonwealth to commemorate four decades of learning, leadership, and innovation in public education.

Since its inception, the Conference on Education has served as a dynamic platform for showcasing exemplary programs, sharing best practices, and fostering professional growth among Virginia's education leaders. The 2025 conference continued this tradition with engaging breakout sessions, student presentations, and recognition of programs that are making a real impact in their communities.

The conference featured a keynote address from Matthew Neale, the 2026 Virginia Teacher of the Year. An English and journalism teacher in Roanoke County Public Schools with 20 years of classroom experience, Neale shared his journey from practicing complex litigation law to pursuing a passion for education in Southwest Virginia.

Attendees also had the opportunity to participate in 13 mini workshops covering a wide range of topics, including building a sustainable workforce in special education, the strategic use of generative AI, student speech rights, and effective communication strategies.

After the awards luncheon, conference participants heard from a student-led panel: "Through Our Eyes: A Student Lens on Education." In this panel, Student School Board Representatives from across Virginia shared their honest reflections and insights on public education.

"This year's 40th Conference on Education is not just a celebration of the past, it's a launchpad for the future," said Gina Patterson, VSBA Executive Director. "For four decades, this event has provided a space for school board members and education leaders to come together, learn from one another, and spark the ideas that move our schools forward. We are proud of this legacy and excited for what lies ahead."

The VSBA remains dedicated to supporting and elevating public education and student achievement in Virginia. This year's conference reaffirmed that commitment with renewed energy and focus on the future of learning.

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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