



# VSBA Board of Directors Regional Scholarship

## Class of 2026



*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.*

# VSBA Board of Directors Regional Scholarship

## OVERVIEW

The **VSBA Board of Directors Regional Scholarship** is a new initiative aimed to recognize and support outstanding high school seniors across the Commonwealth. This scholarship is designed to celebrate students who demonstrate a strong commitment to **academic excellence, community engagement, and who also have well-defined career aspirations**. By investing in the future of these students, the VSBA reaffirms its dedication to the advancement of public education and the successes of young leaders throughout the Commonwealth.

This year's scholarship is open to **graduating seniors from the Class of 2026**. The **2026 spring scholarship recipients will be honored and presented with their awards at the 2026 VSBA Regional Spring Networking Forums**, which will take place between March 3 and May 12, 2026, at varying locations in each VSBA region. **Attendance to the respective Regional Networking Forum is required in order to receive the scholarship.**

This year, the VSBA is offering each of the winning regional students a **\$5,000 scholarship**.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the VSBA Board of Directors Regional Scholarship, applicants must:

- **Must be able to attend their respective Spring Regional Networking Forum\*** (a full list of regional networking forum dates is included on the last page of this guide). If you are unsure of which VSBA region your school division is in, please visit <https://www.vsba.org/vsba-regions/>
- Be a **high school senior graduating in Spring 2026**, in a VSBA member school division.
- **Reside in and attend a public high school in a school division that is a member of the VSBA and located within one of the nine VSBA regions**. For a complete list of VSBA regions and member school divisions, please visit <https://www.vsba.org/vsba-regions/>
- Demonstrate **commitment to their local community** through service and leadership.
- Plan to pursue **post-secondary education**, which may include college, vocational school, or another accredited career training program.

**It is also important to note that all scholarships will be paid directly to the recipient's post-secondary institution (as defined above) upon verification of enrollment.**

All applications must be completed and submitted **no later than 4:00 p.m. Friday, January 30, 2026**. Receipt of applications will be time-stamped by VSBA. Winners will be notified in February 2026.

If you have any questions, please contact Bella Corbo, Member Engagement Specialist, at [bella@vsba.org](mailto:bella@vsba.org) or call 434-295-8722 ext. 2.

*\*A Spring Region Networking Forum is a meeting for regional school divisions to gather and network with other local school divisions within their meeting. Each of the nine VSBA regions has one meeting in the spring.*

# VSBA Board of Directors Regional Scholarship

## **SCHOLARSHIP AWARD THEME:**

Each year, the VSBA will select a theme to guide applicants' essays. This year's **theme is "Champion for Impact,"** encouraging students to reflect on **how they plan to use their education to make a lasting difference in their communities.**

Through this initiative, the VSBA continues to champion the value of public education by empowering students with the resources they need to succeed in college, career training, and beyond.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS & DEADLINE:**

The deadline for submissions is **Friday, January 30, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.**

### **Submission requirements:**

- **Completed application form.** The application form can be found here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VSBARegionalScholar26>
- A **750-1,000 word essay** on this year's theme, ***Champion for Impact***.
- **Resume** detailing academic and extracurricular activities, leadership roles, and community service.
- Provide a **current high school transcript** that includes grades, grade point average, and class rank (if applicable). The transcript must be complete through junior year.
- **Two letters of recommendation** (one from a school official and one from a community member).

Applications must be submitted electronically via the VSBA online application form found here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VSBARegionalScholar26>. The application form will have required attachment questions where you will be able to include your essay, resume, and two letters of recommendation.

All applications must be completed and submitted **no later than 4:00 p.m. Friday, January 30, 2026. Receipt of applications will be time-stamped by VSBA.**

## **All scholarship winners must be able to attend their respective Spring Regional Networking Forum.**

The Spring Regional Networking Forums are an opportunity for school divisions to gather and network regionally with other local school divisions within their forums. Each of the nine VSBA regions has a forum.

## **JUDGING PROCESS:**

Each winner will be selected by a regional selection committee. Each selection committee will include three members of the VSBA Board of Directors. These committees will not include the regional chair for the region (i.e. the Eastern Regional Selection Committee will consist of the Southwest Region Chair, Northeastern Region Chair, and Valley Region Chair).

**Winners will be notified in February 2026. This year, the VSBA will award a \$5,000 scholarship to each regional winner.**

**It is also important to note that all scholarships will be paid directly to the recipient's post-secondary institution (as defined on the previous page) upon verification of enrollment.**

# Selection Criteria

Applicants will be evaluated based on a holistic review process that considers multiple aspects of their academic journey, leadership potential, community involvement, and future aspirations. Rather than focusing solely on grades, the selection committee will assess candidates based on their ability to articulate their goals, demonstrate a history of service and leadership, and showcase resilience and dedication to their education. Each component of the application carries specific weight to ensure a fair and balanced evaluation that recognizes both academic effort and personal achievements.

The criteria are as follows:

1. **Essay (50%)** – A written response (750-1,000 words) reflecting on:
  - a. How the scholarship will support their educational and career goals.
  - b. The impact they aspire to make in their community.
  - c. Contributions the applicant has already made to their community as a high school student.
  - d. Essays will be evaluated based on clarity, originality, depth of reflection, and alignment with the year's scholarship theme.
2. **Academic Performance (25%)** – While GPA will be considered, this is not a primary determining factor. Instead, the selection committee will look for:
  - a. Perseverance and effort in academics.
  - b. Improvement over time or demonstrated resilience in overcoming obstacles.
  - c. A commitment to learning and academic growth.
3. **Extracurricular Involvement & Leadership (25%)** – Assessment of participation in:
  - a. School organizations, clubs, or student government.
  - b. Community service initiatives, civic organizations, or local leadership roles.
  - c. Activities that align with their career aspirations and commitment to service.

# 2026 VSBA Regional Spring Network Forum Dates

<u>Region</u>	<u>Date</u>
Eastern	March 3
Southside	March 11
Central	March 17
Southern	March 25
Blue Ridge	April 14
Tidewater	April 21
Southwest	April 29
Valley	April 30
Northeastern	May 12

**\*Please note – the Regional Networking Forum locations have not yet been determined. Regional Networking Forum locations will be determined at a later date but can happen in any one of the school divisions in that VSBA region.**

**All scholarship winners must be able to attend their respective Spring Regional Networking Forum.**

The Spring Regional Networking Forums are an opportunity for school divisions to gather and network regionally with other local school divisions within their forums. Each of the nine VSBA regions has a forum.



# VSBA

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