



# 2023 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 board that may choose to do so.*

# April 2023–VSBA Workforce Readiness Month

Dear School Board Member/Superintendent:

In an effort to promote the need to identify workforce development opportunities that enable students to be prepared to succeed in the new economy, VSBA has designated the month of April as VSBA Workforce Readiness Month with April 12, 2023, designated as Workforce Readiness Day in Virginia.

The VSBA Task Force on Workforce Readiness was established by the 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 and 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, through social media and will send out a statewide news release urging news organizations to provide coverage of local activities. 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 website and social media channels throughout the month.
- Recognize your 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, highlight existing programs currently offered in the school division.

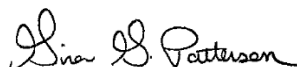
This guide includes several resources to assist you in these efforts, including references to the six goals, a sample news release, and a proclamation adopted by the VSBA Board of Directors.

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

Sincerely,



David Woodard  
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 Career & Technical Education (CTE) across the Commonwealth. Responses were received from 115 of 132 school divisions, providing balanced statewide representation. The following six goals were developed for the task force:

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

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 on the January 18 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 options 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 K12 classrooms.

To address the urgency of filling these positions, both college and career readiness must be central to the mission of our K12 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 in 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 school 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 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 2023 as VSBA Workforce Readiness Month and April 12, 2023, 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**

For Immediate Release

[DATE]

Contact [NAME] [PHONE]

**April is Workforce Readiness Month**

*April 12, 2023 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 skills sets necessary to be successful beyond high school graduation. This is why the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) has declared April to Workforce Readiness Month and April 12, 2023 as Workforce Readiness Day.

Workforce readiness and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs can give students the training needed to succeed for life. Additionally, these programs help students how understand what they're learning applies to the needs of employers. Regardless of whether students are headed for 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 will continue to increase. These jobs can be filled by qualified public school students. [insert school division name] is committed to doing offering workforce development opportunities that will enable students to be successful and globally competitive. The school division currently offers or partners with [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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The Virginia School Boards Association, a voluntary, nonpartisan organization of Virginia school boards, promotes excellence in public education through advocacy, training, and services.