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## **VDOE Launches eLearning Backpack Initiative at Powhatan High**

Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright and state Secretary of Education Laura Fornash visited Powhatan High School this morning to announce the Virginia Department of Education's eLearning Backpack pilot initiative involving the latest generation of graphing calculators from Texas Instruments.

Powhatan County Superintendent Margaret S. Meara, Powhatan High Principal Kris Gwaltney and local school board members and government representatives joined Wright and Fornash for the kickoff. Representing Texas Instruments at the event were Lisa Brady Gill, executive director, North America marketing; Patrick White, state policy director; and Ellen Hook, technology consultant.

Two classes of Algebra I students at Powhatan High will use Texas Instrument's TI-Nspire CX full-color graphing calculators, software and TI-Navigator classroom network to explore functions and statistics as well as linear equations and inequalities.

"This is an opportunity for Virginia teachers and students to use some of the latest educational technology and for the department to study the impact of the devices on teaching and the development of higher-order mathematics skills," Wright said. "At the end of the pilot, VDOE will share what is learned at Powhatan High with schools across the commonwealth."

"Our students can collect real-world data with these devices by measuring motion, temperature, light, sound, force and much more," Powhatan County Superintendent Margaret S. Meara said. "This pilot program is a perfect fit with Powhatan High's focus on project-based learning."

Texas Instruments is providing hardware, software and training for teachers valued at \$35,000 at no charge to the commonwealth or Powhatan County.

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