



# VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION NEWS

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## **Southwest Virginia Next Stop on Board President's Listening Tour *Itinerary Includes Schools in Washington & Wythe Counties***

Virginia Board of Education President David M. Foster continues his listening tour of state educational regions August 22-23 with a visit to Region 7, which comprises 19 school divisions in Southwest Virginia. The tour is designed to provide an opportunity for parents, teachers, local school board members, administrators and interested citizens across the state to express their views on issues facing the commonwealth's public schools.

"The new school year is already well underway in Southwestern Virginia and I want to encourage students and teachers as they strive to meet the state's rigorous new Standards of Learning in English, mathematics, science and history," Foster said. "The region faces many challenges, and education is the key to ensuring that every community, regardless of its distance from the urban crescent of Northern Virginia, Richmond and Hampton Roads, is positioned to take advantage of new opportunities in the global economy."

Foster and fellow board member Billy K. Cannaday will host a forum on education issues on Thursday at 6 p.m. in the auditorium of Abingdon High School in Washington County. The forum, scheduled to last two hours, will begin with a brief presentation by Foster on the Board of Education's constitutional and statutory responsibilities and its goals for the commonwealth's public schools.

"Then I want to listen to the educators and parents of the region," Foster said. "Understanding their views and concerns is essential as the board carries out its responsibilities under legislation approved by the 2013 General Assembly, including the creation of a fair and informative school-grading scale."

On Friday at 8:45 a.m., Wythe County Superintendent Lee Brannon and Principal Mary Walters will lead Foster and Cannaday on a tour of Rural Retreat Elementary School.

Region 7 includes Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise and Wythe counties and the cities of Bristol, Galax, Norton and Radford.

Foster's goal is to visit all eight of Virginia's educational administrative regions by the end of the year.

The Constitution of Virginia vests the Board of Education with primary responsibility for setting policies for the commonwealth's public schools, subject only to the authority of the General Assembly. This includes establishing curriculum and accountability standards for schools and licensure requirements for teachers, principals and other educators.

Details of future listening tour events will be posted on the Virginia Department of Education website in [the public meetings section](#) as they become available.

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