



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION **NEWS**

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Board of Education President Launches Statewide Listening Tour *First Stop Set for March 19-20 in Franklin County*

Virginia Board of Education President David M. Foster will begin a statewide listening tour next week with a two-day visit to the Leonard A. Gereau Center for Applied Technology and Career Exploration in Franklin County.

The tour is designed to give parents, teachers, local school board members, administrators and other interested citizens an opportunity to express their views on issues facing the commonwealth's public schools. Foster will be accompanied by fellow board member Darlene D. Mack of Lynchburg.

"The Board of Education welcomes public comment at its meetings but distance and time constraints typically limit the list of speakers at our meetings in Richmond to persons with immediate interests before the board," Foster said. "By visiting every region of the state, I hope to engage in a dialogue with stakeholders who otherwise would not have an opportunity to speak to the board in person about the challenges facing Virginia's public schools."

Article VIII of 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. The board reports annually to the governor and General Assembly on the conditions and needs of schools.

The Franklin County listening tour will begin on Tuesday, March 19, at 6:30 p.m. in the Gereau Center's interactive lab with a brief presentation by Foster on the role of the Board of Education and its goals. Attendees will then have an opportunity to ask questions and make comments. The listening event is scheduled to conclude by 8:30 p.m.

On Wednesday, March 20, at 8:30 a.m., Franklin County Superintendent W. Mark Church will lead Foster and Mack on a tour of the Gereau Center and introduce the state board members to faculty and students.

Foster plans to visit all eight of Virginia's educational administrative regions by the end of the year. He will be accompanied by another board member on each stop of the tour. Details of future stops will be available on the Virginia Department of Education website as they are scheduled.

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