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Virginia Advisory Committee for Career and Technical Education

Dear Local CTE Administrator:

Please find enclosed copies of the state advisory committee's tips and recommendations for aligning secondary career and technical education with Virginia's labor market needs, and information about the top 15 businesses in your region and Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA).

These resources may help your school division and career and technical education programs develop relationships by engaging local employers and organizations to further strengthen students' employability.

Businesses are teaming up with secondary schools to create rigorous CTE programs that respond to the needs of local, regional, and state labor markets. With the guidance and partnership of business and industry professionals, these programs ensure that students understand the realities of the work force and are prepared with college and career-ready skills needed to succeed in a global economy.

Join us in engaging business and industry in partnerships with CTE programs throughout the Commonwealth!

*Daniel R. Woodley
Chair*

*The Virginia Advisory Committee
for Career and Technical Education*



Engage Local Employers and Strengthen CTE Programs

Want to develop better and deeper connections for your CTE program to the communities and businesses around you? If you need to know how to start the conversation, or how to continue it, these five tips may help. The Virginia Advisory Committee for Career and Technical Education, the CTE Resource Center, and Trailblazers developed these tips for CTE administrators to:

- 1 Engage local employers in the conversation to determine not only their hiring needs but the specific skills that they desire of their workers. This conversation may be initiated in multiple ways:
 - Host career fairs appropriate to career pathways or consider partnering with local business representatives to sponsor a networking event (see, for example, [Hanover](#) or [Chesterfield's Ready. Set. Hire.](#)).
 - Encourage professional-development partnerships between teachers and local employers in their fields.
 - Create opportunities for students to demonstrate their abilities and/or interests to local businesses, and how to provide more work-based learning opportunities for students.
 - Directly address the division PTO/PTA and school board to discuss what is current in CTE, and ask these groups for suggestions to increase connections and cooperation with local employers.

- 2 Develop relationships with local organizations with direct knowledge of local employers and businesses. Such organizations might include, but would not be limited to:
 - chamber of commerce
 - workforce investment board or community contact for economic development
 - service organizations, such as the Lions Club or Rotary.Consider making school facilities available to organizations needing meeting space, or hosting an event at which students volunteer their time and career-specific talents.

- 3 Encourage employer participation on CTE curriculum committees.

- 4 Familiarize yourself with emerging labor force needs through <http://vedpweb.yesvirginia.org/announcements#/NewExpanding>.

- 5 Consider the following questions when proposing to eliminate or add a CTE course or program:
 - a. What proportion of program completers were employed within a year of graduation?¹
 - b. What proportion of program completers, within a year of graduation, were employed in their program of study?¹
 - c. What is the projected annual number of job openings in occupations related to this program?²

¹CTE Completer Follow-Up Survey

²CTE Trailblazers analysis of Virginia Employment Commission data