

VIRGINIA
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EDUCATION N

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SQUEEZED

**Students and
educators feel
the pinch in
Virginia's
cash-strapped
schools.**



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Cover illustration by Brandon O'Neill.





**"It's a true-or-false test,
Jason. I can't accept 'whatever' as an answer."**



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VEA Vision:

A great public school for every child in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

VEA Mission:

The mission of the Virginia Education Association is to unite our members and local communities across the Commonwealth in fulfilling the promise of a high quality public education that successfully prepares every single student to realize his or her full potential. We believe this can be accomplished by advocating for students, education professionals, and support professionals.

Leader of the Pack!

Virginia's public schools were ranked number one in the nation in student achievement in a recent study by Washington-based think tank The Cato Institute. ●



SOURCE: Cato's "Fixing the Bias in Current State K-12 Education Rankings"

Is This What You're Really Saying?

This is part of what a group of Florida teachers recently posted on social media after a commenter told them to "stay focused on teaching our children and leave politics out of it."

OK—we can do that.

We can teach your children—in the few spare moments we will have between all the high-stakes testing mandated by politicians. It won't be what is best for children, but we can do that.

We can teach your children—but without music, art, recess, or any other resource classes that will be cut due to lack of funding. It won't be what is best for children, but we can do that.

We can teach your children—and then go to our second and third jobs because no one is advocating with politicians for our wages and benefits. We'll be tired. We'll sacrifice time with our own families. It won't be what is best for children, but we can do that.

We can teach your children—with outdated materials that don't meet the needs of our 21st century learners due to a lack of funding from politicians. It won't be what is best for children, but we can do that.

We can teach your children—in dilapidated facilities where mold and poor air quality are just par for the course due to a lack of funding. It won't be what is best for children, but we can do that.

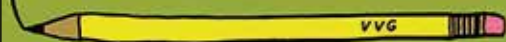
If you could just let us know who will pick up the mantle and fight these battles for your children, we will happily "just teach." ●

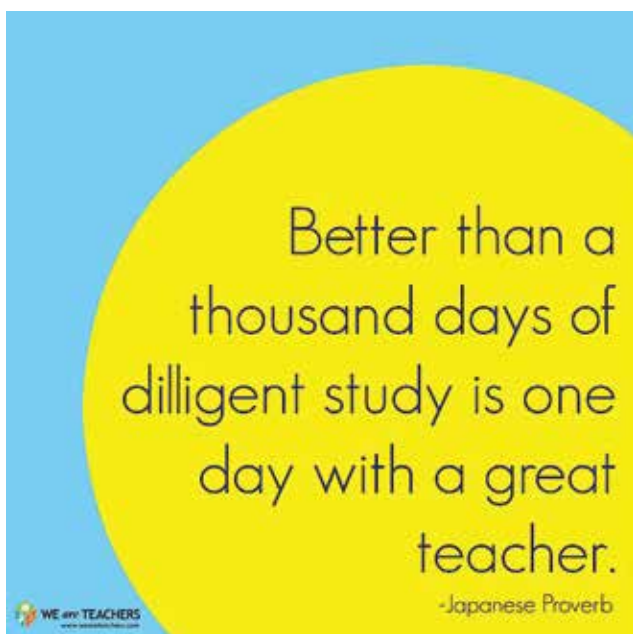
SOURCE: Florida Education Association



I Am ALWAYS
Doing WHAT I
CANNOT DO YET,
IN ORDER to LEARN
How to DO it

VINCENT VAN GOGH





"Staying home today will help reduce the overcrowded classroom problem."



'So Much More Than the Keeper of the Band-Aids'

Montgomery County Education Association member Robin Hylton recently spoke to her school board on behalf of school nurses, who are seeking to be included in the Virginia Retirement System. Here are some excerpts from what she said:

"We are so much more than the 'keeper of the Band-Aids.' We administer numerous medications and deal with students with diabetes, asthma, seizures, life-threatening allergies, feeding tubes, and daily catheterization needs.



Robin Hylton

Our middle and high school nurses deal with teen pregnancy, STIs, and drug use. In elementary school, I see and care for students dealing with drug use by family members. We've all had instances of being that one adult a student reaches out to in a mental health crisis.

We are first in line for medical care and in meeting basic needs for many of our families. Students have come to the clinic asking for shoes, socks, coats, and sometimes even clean clothes or food to take home.

We generate revenue from Medicaid billing and supervise some instructional aides who work one-on-one with special-needs children.

We attend numerous 504, IEP, Child Study, and SAP meetings. We complete state-mandated screening and reports, and provide training, including CPR, to staff members.

We play a vital role in attendance, nutrition, physical and mental wellness, and students' ability to focus—all of which are integral to student achievement. And we love our jobs." ●



"My homework was in my backpack but the school bus lost my luggage."

**14
Million**

Students who are in schools with police but no counselor, nurse, psychologist, or social worker.

SOURCE: ACLU

Looking for a Mentor?

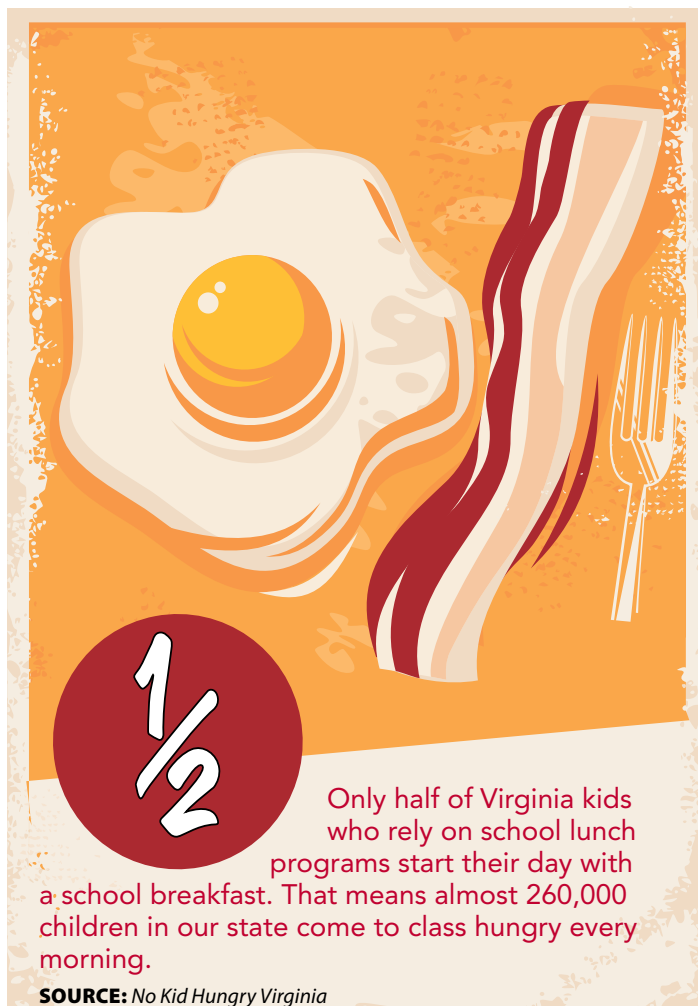
Finding a capable and congenial mentor can change just about everything in your education career: A mentor partners with you to help develop your personal and professional skills through a strong learning relationship. Here, from NEA, are some characteristics you should be looking for in such a person. An effective mentor...

- Is patient, even-tempered, and consistent.
- Is a good listener and can also communicate clearly, without sending mixed messages.
- Is able to give and accept feedback in a constructive manner.
- Respects individuality and differences in backgrounds, values, and experiences.
- Can freely praise.
- Is flexible and has a sense of humor.
- Can think outside the box and make quick decisions if necessary.
- Is a model of professionalism.
- Respects confidentiality and is trustworthy and discreet.
- Works collectively and collaboratively.
- Is enthusiastic about his or her own career and being a mentor.
- Can acknowledge when the mentoring relationship isn't working and is willing to seek help.
- Is a lifetime learner.●



WE CAN'T STAY ON THE SIDELINES "LIFE AND DEATH CONSEQUENCES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH OUR CAPACITY TO HOLD SPACE FOR, LOVE, CARE FOR, AND THINK ABOUT BEING IN COMMUNITY WITH THOSE WHO ARE MARGINALIZED FOR LOTS OF DIFFERENT REASONS. TO BE NEUTRAL IS TO PROVIDE TACIT AGREEMENT WITH ISSUES OF INJUSTICE AS THEY CONTINUE TO PROLIFERATE. [SOCIAL JUSTICE, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION] ARE NOT JUST PRETTY BUZZWORDS."

— Chezare Warren, Michigan State University researcher and faculty member



WE NEED SCHOOL COUNSELORS MORE THAN EVER “WE DON’T WANT TO HANDLE THE ISSUE WHEN IT’S TOO LATE. WE DEFINITELY WANT TO MAKE SURE WE ARE EQUIPPING STUDENTS TO DEAL WITH THEIR EMOTIONS AND TO DEAL WITH EACH OTHER FROM A VERY EARLY AGE. A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELORS ARE FIELDING THREATS OF SELF-HARM AND SUICIDAL IDEATION. AT ALL LEVELS, SCHOOL COUNSELORS HAVE BEEN DEALING WITH IT. I THINK MAKING SURE SCHOOL COUNSELORS ARE APPROPRIATELY STAFFED AND MAKING SURE WE CAN SPEND AN AMOUNT OF TIME ON DIRECT COUNSELING SERVICES ARE KEY TO MAKING SURE KIDS ARE SAFE IN SCHOOL, AND OUTSIDE FOR THAT MATTER.”

— Prince William Education Association member and school counselor Anne Henry, on the importance of providing students with enough counselors

DON’T MAKE LIGHT OF PLAY “PLAY IS OFTEN TALKED ABOUT AS IF IT WERE A RELIEF FROM SERIOUS LEARNING. BUT FOR CHILDREN, PLAY IS SERIOUS LEARNING.”

— Fred (“Mister”) Rogers



Books Open the Door to Magic

“What an astonishing thing a book is. It’s a flat object made from a tree with flexible parts on which are imprinted lots of funny dark squiggles. But one glance at it and you’re inside the mind of another person, maybe somebody dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, an author is speaking clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people who never knew each other, citizens of distant epochs. Books break the shackles of time. A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic.” ●

— Astronomer and author Carl Sagan



Illustration by iStock

SQUEEZED

A stylized illustration on the right side of the page shows a person with dark hair and a yellow shirt being squeezed by a large, thick black horizontal bar. The person's legs are blue, and they appear to be struggling under the weight of the bar. The background is a textured, light gray.

Students and educators are feeling the pinch in Virginia's cash-strapped schools.

If you've been keeping score at home, you may have heard statistics like these during VEA's ongoing Fund Our Future campaign:

- Virginia is the 12th wealthiest state in the U.S., but ranks 42nd in per-pupil state funding.
- Virginia teachers are currently paid \$9,316 less than the national average teacher salary.
- Since 2009, Virginia's state funding of K-12 schools has fallen 9 percent when adjusted for inflation. Meanwhile, student enrollments have risen.

"Statistics are human beings with the tears dried off," author Paul Brodeur once said. Indeed, what often seems lost in the facts and figures of school funding are the faces of the hard-working educators and just-getting-started young people who spend their days in those schools.

Real people, including some you may work with, live near, or even live in your house, are being hurt by the underfunding of Virginia's public schools. Real lives are being affected. Real pain is being felt. Here are a few of their stories:



TREADING WATER, SLOWLY GOING UNDER

The starting salary for a teacher in Russell County with a bachelor's degree is \$31,700 and \$33,700 for a master's, which ranks us 130th in the Commonwealth (out of 132 school divisions).



Vickie Kitts

When compared to other school districts in Southwest Virginia, we rank at the bottom. Our ranking does not

get much better as one gains years of experience. It takes until **step 28** until teachers reach the Virginia average and our top pay never reaches the national average.

We did get a 2 percent raise this school year, but our insurance premiums almost doubled. Each year most employees are taking home less than in the previous year. We have many who work in our afterschool programs, coach, and take on part-time jobs to make ends meet. This should not be a reality for educational professionals.

— Vickie Kitts, Russell County Education Association

THE OVER-30 CROWD

I don't want our students to be hurt any more than they've already been hurt by underfunding. We are so low, compared to other counties, in per-pupil funding. I've been a classroom teacher with 32 or 33 students—in a math class with that many, you're lucky if you're getting to the ones who are raising their

hands with questions. The ones with questions who aren't raising their hands don't always get the time they deserve.

Our students deserve better than what they're getting.

— Michele Wickman, Stafford Education Association

DIETARY CHOICES

Paying for things for my classroom is a struggle. For example, I had to buy three surge protectors/extension cords for our computers. That was a lot. Then I realized I needed another one because the one that the school provided me doesn't handle the computers. Another school-provided one is starting to break. I now need to buy two more power cords, but I'm tight on money. So, I have to play this game where I choose how well >>>

I want to eat or if I want the supplies my students need.

I hate that I may have to use a broken extension cord, but I also don't have unlimited funds to keep buying all the things my students need, and that's just one example. This goes on constantly and I never feel like there's a way out of it. I want to buy everything I need and want but I don't have the means to do that. I hate that I have to decide if I want to eat PB&J sandwiches for dinner for a week so I can get extension cords, or allow myself to have chicken but have my students suffer.

— Alexa Severo, Loudoun Education Association

IT'S EXHAUSTING

I'm tired of cuts to art and music programs. I'm tired of seeing teachers establish "Go Fund Me" accounts for just basic supplies. I'm tired of seeing veteran teachers leave the classroom because they can't afford to feed and clothe their families. I'm tired of seeing new teachers get overcrowded classrooms because school divisions are unable to hire a full cadre of new employees. I'm tired of coming home with a paycheck my non-educator friends find laughable.

One of my friends, a self-proclaimed Libertarian, likes to proclaim that "money can't solve all our problems." While this may or may not be true, how would we know? Our General Assembly has not once lived up to its constitutional mandate to fully fund the state's share of K-12 costs. Not once.

— Joseph T. Emerson, Newport News Education Association

PUTTING FOOD ON THE TABLE

I was preparing to enjoy a luncheon and saw a co-worker put a burger in



Robbie Jones

the refrigerator from the lunchroom. When asked why they weren't going to eat what had been prepared for us, the reply was, "I'm taking it home for my son's supper."

— Robbie Jones, Montgomery County Education Association

WORKING RETAIL

I have taken on a second job at Wal-Mart to pay off my son's dental bills as well as my student loans. When my husband retires in two years, we hope I won't have to take a third job to pay the bills.

It's a shame that as a professionally-trained, college-educated person, I can't afford to live in the county I work in. Teachers are worth our pay—and more—with all that we do. It is not just the reading and writing: We're now counselors, advocates for our students, free tutors with our required after-school hours, and even educational consultants, as parents often ask for help on the best ways to get into post-secondary schools and how to apply for scholarships. We're referees when students argue or fight; cheerleaders for kids who have no one in their corner; and activity directors when we offer clubs and activities after school, often without a stipend.

— LaRina Clark, Prince William Education Association

NOT ENOUGH 'COUNSEL'

My school has sixth- through 12th-graders, some there to catch up to appropriate grade levels, some because they've been suspended from

their "home" school, some because they're connected to the penal system, and others because they have coping difficulties in large schools and/or social anxieties. Our issues are vast and wide, and we don't have adequate counseling. One year when we did have a counselor, she was only allowed to guide



Afreen Gootee

students on job placement! Many of our students need daily therapy sessions, and our teachers aren't

trained to deal with those who've been affected by trauma or mental illness, which, unfortunately, many of our students have been. Also, approximately 40 percent of our students have special needs and we only have one special ed teacher. He's currently way above the state standard for the number of students he should be dealing with.

— Afreen Gootee, Hanover Education Association

RUNNING A CONSTRUCTION COMPANY—AND TEACHING

Our pay scale was frozen in 2008, which we were told was "temporary." While there have been a few raises since then, none have come close to the 3 percent yearly cost of living increases typically found in Central Virginia.

Since the freeze, staff turnover has increased dramatically, fewer schools have reached accreditation, and class sizes have increased. We've also got seventh-graders using history textbooks printed in >>>

EDUCATED AT WILLIAM & MARY AND STANFORD. AWARD-WINNING TEACHER. ASSOCIATION LEADER. AND NOW, FUNDING CASUALTY.

He's got the kind of resume principals and human resources directors dream about when they're hiring a teacher: An undergraduate degree from William & Mary; a graduate degree from Stanford; on his way to National Board Certification; winner of the 2019 Judy Flythe Teacher Leadership Award and finalist for a 2019 R.E.B. Award (both prestigious educational honors bestowed in the Richmond metropolitan area); and one of the National Education Association's 2017 30 Under 30. Any school division in the state would love to have him.

This fall, however, none will. When this school year ends, Cody Sigmon of the Chesterfield Education Association is leaving the classroom, a casualty of school underfunding.

What are we doing to ourselves, Virginia?

Looking into his future, Sigmon saw that he simply cannot stay in his middle school English classroom and still afford the kind of life he wants—and that his resume merits.

"I'm not leaving because of the kids—never because of the kids," he's quick to point out. "I'm leaving because of a system that extracts as much labor as possible out of me for as little as it can pay me. Study after study says that teachers are overworked, undercompensated, overstressed, and leaving the profession in droves. Still, the best Virginia can do, after offering \$1 billion in tax breaks to Amazon, is cobble together a paltry raise that barely outpaces inflation and still doesn't dig us out of our massive pay gap. I have spent years demanding that my hard work be compensated better. Perhaps the only way they'll eventually listen is if I leave."

Educators have always known that their salaries wouldn't land them in Beverly Hills, but also knew that their retirement would be secure. Sigmon says that even that is now gone.

"My retirement program has been gutted," he says.

"Instead of a pension, I get a hybrid plan, which forces people to do a 'defined contribution' in addition to the 'defined benefit.' Pretty much all the experts agree that this not enough to retire on. And, like many people my age, I started my career with significant student loans. After five years of teaching, I'm still paying on them."

This fall, Sigmon starts a new direction on his career path by going to work in the information technology office at an out-of-state university. His financial life will get a significant upgrade.

"I'll be part of a pension plan where I'll contribute 10 percent and have 14 percent matched. "When I retire, there will be a defined benefit. I'll be making more money, which means I can pay off my loans faster, and health insurance will cost less."

And he'll become an unfortunate, unnecessary statistic here: "I will be one of the 40 percent of Virginia teachers who leave the classroom in their first 5 years," says Sigmon. "I am a highly-trained, highly-qualified teacher whose training and professional experience have made me attractive to employers who are willing to compensate me more. It's a shame Virginia seems disinterested in keeping me." ●

George W. Bush's first year in office, buildings leak, and department budgets have not increased since the 1990s.

Although I'm halfway through my 28th year of teaching, I'm still being paid like I just finished year 16. I've had to take on additional responsibilities just to make ends meet. At one point, I was seventh-grade team leader, history department head, athletic director, and communications director for the school's TV studio. I also got my CDL to drive sports teams, taught history, started my own construction business, and was president of the LEA all at the same time. It is not uncommon for me to work seven days a week.

And I'm not alone in this. There are at least three people in my building who have their contractor's licenses. Another five work retail.
— *Karl Loos, Lynchburg Education Association*

IT'S A SAFETY ISSUE

There is simply an inadequate number of professional school counselors, creating an increased



Theresa Abdulbaaqee

time we demonstrate that we put school safety first, that the safety of students and teachers truly matters. We need additional guidance counselors for group and individual counseling sessions, lessons and discussions on character building, and assistance in handling behaviors and crisis intervention.

— *Theresa Abdulbaaqee, Virginia Beach Education Association*

safety risk to teachers and students—and the primary goal of schools is to keep students in a safe learning environment. It's

I'M A VOLUNTEER

Teachers in our school division do after-school remediation classes for free because the county can't afford to pay them for it, and one of our four school buildings will not get needed renovations for the same reason.

My library budget has been cut, so I've canceled our monthly book shipments.

— *Rebecca Jasman, Madison County Education Association*

Virginia has far too many of these stories—and it doesn't have to be that way. We have the ability to start writing new ones.

Join the growing momentum in our state by sharing your own stories about the underfunding issues you're facing at VEA's Fund Our Future website, fundourfutureva.org. ●

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Here are more examples of what's happening in our state's public schools, taken from The Commonwealth Institute report, "Demonstrated Harm: Cuts to School Funding are Hurting Virginia Classrooms":

- A **Richmond City** teacher said that one of the content areas in her school would not be getting books until November, two months after the start of the school year. As a result, she says, "our basic instructional materials aren't even in the building...And that is if you get to order [books]...Our students have textbooks that date all the way back to 1998."
- A **Brunswick County** teacher explained, "We have 21st century learners...and, a lot of the classrooms still don't have Promethean or Smart Boards. With math, there are a lot of different virtual manipulatives that can be used to really simplify different concepts...I'm stuck to a projector."
- In **Norfolk**, teachers explained that when it rains they have to place buckets "up and down the hallway...In our annex...most of [our tiles] are a brownish color and they are sinking and falling...And you can see water come down the walls, literally you can see the water."
- A **Tidewater** administrator: "In urban environments, children most benefit when class sizes are smaller...Our class size numbers are huge: 30-35 students in our core subjects." ●

Righting a Wrong

Unnecessarily severe disciplinary action against a Stafford teacher endangers a career. VEA responds by leading charge to pass 'Rebecca Bill' and add further protections for teachers.

By Tom Allen



Rebecca Whitford stands in Virginia's House of Delegates after the 'Rebecca Bill' passed.

Rebecca Whitford had a spotless 25-year record as an elementary school teacher, the last 15 in Stafford County—never a reprimand or any hint of trouble, and solidly supported by parents, students, and administrators.

Then one day in May 2017, the Stafford Education Association member sent a text message.

It was only her second year of teaching third grade since the Standards of Learning tests had been implemented; she and her team were prepping for the math section, having recently taken the reading test. During a conversation with a teacher

from outside Stafford during the Memorial Day weekend, the other teacher mentioned that children most often make mistakes in areas such as elapsed time, fractions, and adding and counting money.

Those items are hardly a secret. "They're all listed on the State Board of Education website as strands that will be on the test," says Cathie Lee, a VEA staff attorney.

Whitford texted her teammates, reminding them to review those topics with students, mentioning that "a little birdie" had told her. "It changed my life," she says now.

She hit "send" and then enjoyed

the rest of the holiday weekend. Nothing was said on the Tuesday she came back to school, but Wednesday she was summoned to a meeting with her principal and a local SOL representative. There, she was questioned about the text, the source of her information (which she chooses not to reveal to this day), and why she'd sent the message. The text had been reported by a colleague.

"I've never cheated in my life," Whitford says, "and there was no reason for me to cheat on the SOLs. I've never been intimidated by my students' test scores. I know I'm a good teacher and my boss and my >>>

students' parents know it, too. I'm very passionate about my work."

However, immediately after the meeting she was asked to write and sign a letter stating exactly what she'd done. Following that, she was given a letter advising her that she was now on leave, with pay, and suggesting that she not return to school property until after her case was resolved. She was allowed to get her things from her classroom (her principal honored her request to have the students leave the room first), and shown out.

Later, she learned that she'd been recommended for dismissal and revocation of her teaching license for violation of secure testing procedures.

Thus began a lengthy process of hearings and meetings that lasted until March 2018 and resulted in Whitford being fired by Stafford County and having her teaching license suspended for the rest of that school year. During the protracted legal activities, she worked as a tutor and in Spotsylvania County as a substitute teacher.

The school division came after Whitford hard, seeking not only her termination but the permanent revocation of her teaching license. Steady advocacy on Whitford's behalf by both Lee and a VEA-provided attorney staved off the permanent loss of her license, in effect saving her career. Her case was also buoyed by the appearance of 22 witnesses who showed up at a public hearing to testify on her behalf.

"I had a list of 50," Whitford says, visibly moved by the outpouring of support she received, "but they

wouldn't let that many participate. People I didn't even know wanted to speak for me." Members of the Stafford Education Association wore red to show that they were behind her, and her colleagues rallied to her side.

"If you fire her," a fellow teacher told the school board, "how are we

what I love to do, helping children learn and be the best that they can be," she says. "It's all I was ever trying to do."

The whole process was an extremely painful ordeal for Whitford and so VEA's Lee, members of the Stafford and Spotsylvania education associations, VEA's government relations team, Whitford's UniServ Directors, and others decided that no other Virginia teacher should ever have to endure again what she went through.

After two huge, Association-driven changes, it's unlikely that any ever will.

THE 'REBECCA BILL'

First, VEA initiated legislation that's come to be known as the "Rebecca Bill." It sailed through the 2019 General Assembly and will become law July 1. As school law was previously written, school boards had only two choices in teacher license proceedings: revocation or suspension, both very harsh measures. The Rebecca Bill (next page), which was carried by Delegate Bob Thomas of Stafford, adds

a reprimand option, which doesn't directly affect a teacher's license.

"This is a huge win," says Lee. "Every other profession has options short of taking away someone's license, like recommending continuing education or treatment, in cases of substance abuse. Teachers had not been afforded that possibility."

She notes that the new option is especially important in light of a seemingly more punitive environment for teachers that's developed in recent years. During the 2016-17 school year, petitions to suspend or



Whitford credits VEA staff, including UniServ Directors Robin Gardner (l) and Jennifer Theut, for helping her out of a very difficult situation.

supposed to prepare for SOL tests? When students take the SAT, you always look at questions that have been most difficult on past tests."

In the end, though, the school board did choose to fire Whitford. Today, however, with all the legal business settled and behind her, she has her license again and was quickly hired to teach second grade in Spotsylvania County, where she's delighted to have her professional life back.

"I am happy to be back doing

revoke teacher licenses at the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) grew an alarming 62 percent from the previous year.

Whitford is delighted with the legislative win. "I'm so proud of the way so many people supported me," she says, "and how they turned a bad situation into something that will now benefit all teachers in Virginia."

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

The process Whitford had to go through also underscored how the license hearing process at the State Board of Education has been stacked against teachers. The teacher whose license is in jeopardy has had to go first, followed by the prosecution, and the teacher's attorney had no

chance to cross-examine witnesses.

"There has been no impartial decision-maker," says VEA's Lee. "That's not the way this is supposed to work."

The Association kicked off a process, beginning with VDOE staff

"IN 2016-17, PETITIONS TO SUSPEND OR REVOKE TEACHER LICENSES AT THE VDOE GREW AN ALARMING 62 PERCENT."

and later including State Board of Education members, to get the hearing procedures changed to provide basic due process for teachers. Along the way, VEA staffers met with Attorney General Mark Herring and members of his staff to make the case for more equitable procedures.

The result? As of last November, in license hearings the VDOE must present its case first and has the burden of proof. Teachers' representatives can cross-examine witnesses, there is an impartial fact-finding

panel, and the State Superintendent can no longer participate in deliberations at the final hearing before the Board of Education—all changes that Lee calls "absolutely tremendous" for teachers. ●

Allen is the editor of the Virginia Journal of Education.

A 'REPRIMAND' OPTION 'REBECCA'S BILL' MAKES IT THE LAW

The following is an excerpt of a Code of Virginia section affected by House Bill 2325, the "Rebecca Bill," which deals with the discipline of school board employees. Words in italics are changes to the Code put in place by the bill.

A. The Board of Education may *(i) issue written reprimand to or (ii) suspend or revoke the administrative or teaching license of any holder of a Board-issued administrative or teaching license who knowingly and willfully commits any of the following acts related to secure mandatory tests administered to students as required by this title or by the Board of Education:*

1. Giving unauthorized access to secure test questions;
2. Copying or reproducing all or any portion of any secure test booklet;
3. Divulging the contents of any portion of a secure test;
4. Coaching or assisting examinees during testing or altering test materials or examinees' responses in any way;
5. Making available any answer keys;
6. Failing to follow test security procedures established by the Department of Education;
7. Providing a false certification on any test security form required by the Department of Education;
8. Retaining a copy of secure test questions;
9. Excluding students from testing who are required to be assessed; and
10. Participating in, directing, aiding, assisting in, or encouraging any of the acts prohibited by this section. ●

For the purposes of this section, "secure test" means an item, question, or test that has not been made publicly available by the Department of Education (emphasis ours).

GEN-erating Success in Dinwiddie

A scheduling change helps high-schoolers make connections and get help.

By Sharon Gibbs

At Dinwiddie High School, we believe in the classic adage that “It takes a village to raise a child,” but we were also struggling to find ways for our students to meet each other, engage in fun activities, get the remediation they need, and make connections with faculty and staff members.

Our solution? We call it GEN Block, an advisory period we started last fall as a daily opportunity to build relationships throughout our school. DHS’s mascot is the General, so we named the 40-minute block GEN, which stands for Guidance, Enrichment, and Needs.

GEN Block grew out of a committee of administrators, teachers, ITRTs, and counselors that began meeting last spring, looking for ways to give at-risk students the help they need during the school day. Dinwiddie is a large, rural county, and many of our students have difficulty staying



after school for extra help because of transportation issues and parental work schedules.

The committee settled on the idea of scheduling an extra period and using it not only to provide remediation, but to offer a more communal approach to education and create some classes that especially pique the interest of both students and teachers. Thus, the 40-minute GEN Block was born.

The “G” part of the block focuses on giving students additional academic counseling. Each student is assigned an advisor, who meets with them every Wednesday. Those meetings are held in groups of 15-17 and include students in every grade at DHS. Students stay with the same advisor and classmates for their entire high school careers, for three reasons. One, younger students can establish relationships with upperclassmen with whom they might otherwise have little contact, which creates not only friendships but another guidance option for freshmen and sophomores. Two, the advisor has a weekly checklist for each student, including missing work, attendance, grades, and any issues the student is having with a teacher or school in general. So the advisor becomes the student’s go-to person. And third, this advisory block provides a time for students with make-up work to complete it during the school day without missing class time. We created a Google form allowing teachers to submit missing assignments to a coordinator, who both notifies students and oversees the make-up work.

The guidance portion of the block lasts all year; the enrichment component rotates every six weeks. Students can choose an enrichment

option for every day of the week except for Wednesday’s advisory session. Our teachers create enrichment courses based on their own interests, allowing students to create new connections with faculty members outside of the traditional classroom setting. Some of the courses being offered now include a puppy room, archery, robotics, conspiracy theories, sewing, line-dancing, yoga, A.P. Prep, and body transformation. Since GEN Block happens right in the middle of the school day, it provides a much-needed break for both students and teachers. In addition, GEN Block also allows us to free up time for teachers, students, and parents after school. For example, club meetings, band practices, and other after-school activities can be scheduled during GEN Block.

The final and perhaps most important component of GEN Block is need-based remediation. If students require additional help, they can get it four days a week during school, eliminating the need for after-school transportation. A day is set aside for core classes, including English, math, science, social studies and world languages, and students who need help can either recommend themselves or be identified by teachers. Once a student masters the concept or unit that’s been a struggle, he or she returns to their previously selected enrichment course. This block of time is also used to remediate term graduates who need verified credits to graduate.

This approach allows us to provide incremental remediation when concepts are fresh in the minds of the students rather than inundating them with a vast amount of infor-

mation just prior to a Standards of Learning or other test.

An additional asset to teachers has been the creation of in-house professional learning communities



Work and play: Some Dinwiddie High School students are spending GEN Block time in the Puppy Room; others enjoy a bit of game time.

(PLC). Each department is allotted time once a week during the GEN Block to meet and discuss whatever current issues need to be addressed. This has been extremely helpful with lesson planning, professional development, and curriculum writing. Previously, teachers would hold a monthly meeting after school to address these issues. Now, it happens weekly without using after-school time.

We think GEN Block has been a success at DHS. New relationships have been formed, creating a more friendly and nurturing learning environment. We offer new enrichment activities and as different ones are suggested and new student needs are identified, we incorporate them, too. The GEN Block is another step in the right direction toward meeting the needs of our students. ●

Gibbs, a member of the Dinwiddie Education Association, is an assistant principal at Dinwiddie High School.

By Design

An Arlington teacher suggests ‘carving’ every school day into a work of art.

By Richard Russey

*“Carve each day as if it were a sculpture,” is a paraphrase of a brilliant line written by Tennessee Williams for his play *Suddenly Last Summer*, and he spoke from the soul when he conjured up that phrase. It’s one of the many lines of dialogue that make his play a classic.*

It’s also a line we can imagine applying to our personal and professional lives. How might we use it in our daily world professional activities and pursuits?

Artists, be they playwrights, actors, painters, dancers, or sculptors, “carve” their expressive pursuits with habits of heart and mind that we, as teachers and other education professionals, would be smart to emulate.

What are some concepts that might enable us to “carve” each day as if it were our own personal, living sculpture? Let’s explore a few we might apply to our work each day.

PURPOSEFULNESS

You simply cannot look back on a day’s teaching and call it a success—or a disappointment—if it didn’t begin with a purpose. Time is short, and we may consider the purpose of our work obvious, but to the extent that we consider the purpose of each day, indeed each moment of each day, we are then creating and carving it as if it were a sculpture. The purpose can be simple or complex; it may be riddled with challenges or an easy romp to the finish line. Nonetheless, to start out your day without a sense of purpose is like trying to live without food and water. Purpose provides the basic fuel for our direction forward.



INTENTIONALITY

A corollary to purpose is intentionality, but with added specificity. Intention involves complexities, like meaning and objectives—both of which are at the forefront of an educator’s mind every day. What steps must you take to carve your day with both purpose

and intentionality? In its most simple application, this may take the form of a “to-do” list. I remember when I was very young, perhaps no older than 9 or 10 years old, I kept copious lists taped to my small bedroom mirror. I began to worry that this was a sign of weakness, that my reliance on notes

to myself must be an indication of a lack of memory. Worried enough to go to my father with my concern, I find his wisdom has helped me to this day. He said, “The most successful people work from daily to-do lists . . . keep your list, check off your successful completion of tasks, and you will be on your way to a lifetime of

success."We're wise to target each day with intention.

GOAL ORIENTATION

Goals turn our daily ambitions and aspirations into concrete concepts. This is, of course, common practice to most teachers, as we teach from a set of goals related to content and grade level. But working from goals can become rote, so I suggest frequently refreshing your familiarity with your goals and how they relate to a particular place in your school year. By setting into motion the powerful forces of purpose and intent, we allow our complex brains to begin to plan and plot the goals and activities necessary to carry out a successful day, every day. Don't forget that your own personality and needs (or, your authentic self) should play a part in what your goal blueprint might look like."

ORGANIZATION

Once you've considered your goals, how do you organize your day to meet them? There are about as many ways to organize as there are people on the planet, and the only one that will really lead to success is one that works for you, considering your personality, style, manner, belief system, and approach to life. Time management is a piece of this concept, as well. Consider how you use your time and consider whether each action of your day is serving to move you toward satisfying completion.

ADAPTABILITY

Be ready for the unexpected. The ever-present possibility of being taken off track makes some people extremely uncomfortable. It's here where our "sculpture per diem" is threatened the most, but it doesn't have to be that way. There will be many exter-

nal or internal forces at work that will challenge your neatly considered daily concept, purpose, intentionality, and organization. Your response to those forces is what matters most. Be prepared to adapt. You must be willing to change to meet new requirements, to be willing to work the sculpting of your day with a different approach. Adaptability does not mean letting go of your greater purpose, intentions, or organization. It does mean being ready to react to a changing environment, to new conditions, and to the unexpected. When confronted with change, we can either adapt our plan to include it, fight it, or flee to the relative comfort of old patterns.

PASSION

Intense emotion and enthusiasm are two definitions of passion. Everyone relates to passion in their own way, but it's important to recognize that a successful day-to-day life must include passion. Can you teach without passion? Sure, you can stand in front of a classroom and share what you know, and even achieve a certain modicum of success. But to be able to close your classroom door and reflect on your day with a sense of deep satisfaction, passion will have had to play a part in the creation and successful realization of that day (or week, or month, or school year).

So, find some aspect of your work that you are truly passionate about. If passion is there, you'll know it—it shines forth from you like a beacon to others. Passion will give you the fuel to burn away the myriad of distractions that could take you off track. Passion will remind you that each moment is precious, that your goal completion for the day is paramount, and that the clock is ticking. Passion is also a quality of the heart that will allow a tear to

come to your eye even after years of working with young people. For example, I recently attended a press event for a major arts education initiative in my community. As the politicians and leaders made their speeches, I began to feel the emotion surge. But when a group of first-graders read their own letters of gratitude to the mayor, the tears flowed. Was I embarrassed? No! Rather, I was deeply grateful to have such strong feeling about my life's work, even after decades "in the trenches." Embrace passion; it's like booster fuel to energize your work and your life.

INSPIRATION

Finally, there is the elusive element of inspiration. How can you be open to this? Alertness and the willingness to learn from what you see, hear, feel, and experience is all you need. A single word can inspire. A song can inspire. A conversation with a friend or colleague can inspire. Inspiration is often linked with beauty, as in "that beautiful flower inspires me to recognize my own beauty." Let me be very clear: inspiration can come from just about anything in your life. A difficult day in the classroom is something we experience regularly. Negativity can actually help us find ways to live in a world where all is not necessarily peaceful and beautiful. With the simple intention of being open to inspiration, we allow it to at the very least to drip into our consciousness in a gentle manner. Sometimes you may find a fire hose of powerful inspirations coming at you with such force that you're knocked off your feet momentarily. In either case, grab a hold of that inspiration to create your reality.

Now, go out and create today, and all of your days! ●

Russey, a member of the Arlington Education Association, is an art teacher at Carlin Springs Elementary School.

We Don't Have Enough Teachers of Color. VEA Conference Attendees Share Stories, Strategies, and Solutions

When it was time for her son to register for kindergarten, Norfolk teacher Tamu Crisden visited her neighborhood school, where she saw a display of staff photos. "There wasn't one black teacher, administrator, or even cafeteria worker," she said. "So he went to the school down the street, the one other parents were trying to get their kids out of. They had at least a few black staff members there, and I know it has an impact."

Today, her son is 14 and, she says, has greatly benefited from being in schools with staff members who look like him.

"He loves his white teachers," Crisden said, "but to see black educators means everything. He knows he's not alone."

Stories like that are why VEA held its third conference on Recruiting and Retaining Teachers of Color, this time in February at Norfolk State University. There, Leah Dozier Walker, the Virginia Department of Education's director of equity and community engagement, told participants that students of color now make up 51 percent of the state's public school population, but that 82 percent of our teachers are white.

"Students of all colors and nationalities need a role model," said Dr. Toney McNair, a Chesapeake Education Association member and Virginia's 2017 Teacher of the Year. "They need someone they can develop a relationship with—it will help them be both better students and better individuals."

More than 150 teachers, college students, administrators, and human resources professionals spent the day on the NSU campus in sessions on topics that included using the media to recruit minority teachers, interesting young black males in education careers, prepping candidates for Praxis tests, "grow-your-own" programs, supporting culturally responsive school climates, and retaining minority teachers through instructional coaching.

"We must confront the problem of disproportionate representation," VEA President Jim Livingston told the crowd, "and VEA continues to lead both the dialogue on this issue and the search for solutions."

NSU senior Lonniel Swinton, who will be entering the public school teaching workforce soon, knows those solutions are needed. "I didn't see a teacher who looked like me until high school," he said, "but he made me see that I can do this because I have a model."

SVEA Vice President Morgan Brown, a senior at Old Dominion University, is also ready to be part of growing the percentages of minority teachers in our schools. "My mother was often the only teacher of color in her building," she said. "I saw her make a home for many students who needed one and I want to do that, too."

VEA Executive Director Brenda Pike closed the conference with a challenge for attendees. "Ask yourself: What can I do? What do I have the power to do with something I learned today?" she said. "How do I help move this to the next level?" ●



During a jam-packed day at VEA's Recruiting and Retaining Teachers of Color Conference, attendees heard from an impressive lineup of speakers, including Delegate Jennifer D. Carroll Foy (lower right), who represents parts of Prince William and Stafford counties..

Sadly, Less Bang for the Buck

Teacher salaries in Virginia, for both bachelor's and master's degree holders, have not kept pace with inflation for the last decade, with an average raise of less than 1 percent. As a result, teachers have lost purchasing power at every five-year career benchmark, ranging from a loss of \$1,126



for new teachers with bachelor's degrees to over \$5,300 for 25-year teachers with the same degree. Master's level teachers have also lost purchasing power at every benchmark since 2008-09, ranging from \$1,322 for new teachers to almost \$5,600 for 25-year teachers.

Source: VEA's report, "2018-19 Salary Study for Teachers". ●

NEA Grants Available

The NEA Foundation can help you launch your classroom to new heights through its grants program. Here are two ways:

- Student Achievement Grants, for \$2000 and \$5000, fund projects designed to help students learn to think critically and problem-solve.
- Learning & Leadership Grants, in varying amounts, pay for high-quality professional development.

For information and applications, visit www.neafoundation.org. ●

Two Opportunities from California Casualty

Could your school use a little help with its music and arts program? How about a sprucing up of the school lounge?

California Casualty, longtime sponsor of VEA/NEA activities, may be able to help on both counts through its Music & Arts Grants and School Lounge Makeover Contest.

The Music & Arts Grants offer funding of \$250 to meet needs at your school. Information is at www.calcasmusicartsggrant.com.

The Makeover Contest offers \$7500 to transform a lounge from ordinary to extraordinary. Learn more at www.yourschoollounge.com/nea. ●



CALENDAR

conferences

Local Officers Retreat

July 14-16, 2019

University of Richmond

Reggie Smith Organizing School

July 17-19, 2019

University of Richmond

VEA Instructional Conference

October 11-12, 2019

Richmond Marriott

EDUCATE AGITATE ORGANIZE

REGGIE SMITH ORGANIZING SCHOOL
July 17-19, 2019 University of Richmond



VEA RSOS

Join Us at Reggie!

The 2019 Reggie Smith Organizing School is all about helping members strengthen their local associations. Find out about this year's event at <https://vea.link/rsos2019>.

Conference photos by *Reilly Bradshaw* and *Lisa Sale*, illustration by *iStock*

Jessee Continues Advocacy as Retiree

The first in a series on distinguished leaders of VEA-Retired, honoring them for both their past work and continuing contributions.

By Martha Wood



Though she retired in 2010, Debbie Jessee hasn't left public education behind. For starters, she's a member of the VEA-Retired Council and has served as a delegate to both the VEA and NEA conventions. When's she not been a delegate, the longtime Lee County teacher has volunteered as a mike monitor, with NEA-Retired registration and elections, and has participated in Outreach to Teach projects.

Oh, and in her spare time, she's an elected member of the Lee County School Board.

During her years in the classroom, Debbie taught high school Spanish and history, coached tennis, and drove a school bus on many school-sponsored trips. At the same time, she served as the Lee County Education Association president, salary chair and representative on the Cumberland Mountain UniServ Council and District 1 Council. Her hard work at the local level led to being voted District President and a member of the VEA Board of Directors. ●



Stepping Up, Speaking Up

Around Virginia, local association leaders are stepping up to podiums at meetings and press conferences to speak loudly and publicly on behalf of members, and talking about teaching and learning conditions. Here are just a couple recent examples:

"You've had to cut it and cut it until there's nothing left to cut...Some schools are bursting at the seams, and the county's teacher retention record leaves much to be desired."

— Culpeper County Education Association President Michael McKenna

"Teachers just want to come to work, receive equitable pay and have beautiful buildings and resources for Richmond's finest. We are just hoping the elected officials will do what's right."

— Richmond Education Association President A. Ramon Moore ●

PRESIDENT'S
MESSAGE

We Made Things Happen in 2019 Session

2019's General Assembly session was one of the most productive in years for public schools. Is it a coincidence that significant progress was made after our Fund Our Future rally and after our members so actively contacted legislators, both online and in person?

I think not.

In fact, I *know* not. None of the progress made in Richmond happened by accident: It happened because we were heard. We raised our collective voice and drew attention to the needs of our students and educators like never before. And, as a result, here's just some of the real steps forward you helped make:

Budget boosts. During the budget process, \$72.7 million was added to make state support for a 5 percent teacher salary increase a reality. Nearly \$25 million was also added for our most at-risk students and another \$35 million for school construction.

Teacher license protection. The "Rebecca Bill" (see page 13) now gives the Virginia Board of Education more latitude in dealing with licensed educators facing disciplinary action.

Diversity in our teaching force. Growing out of concerns expressed at VEA's first Teacher of Color Summit in 2017, legislation passed this session helps break down barriers into the profession for minority candidates. Changes are coming in the assessment requirements for entry into teacher preparation programs, earning an initial license, and completing provisional



licenses.

School start dates. We've been fighting for years for the flexibility of local school divisions to begin the school year when they think it makes the most sense. While this year's bill is a bit complicated, it's a big win—it eliminates the need for any school division to get a waiver to start early, protects school divisions that currently have such a waiver, and allows all school divisions to begin before Labor Day.

School counselors. While the General Assembly didn't fund the counselor-student ratios recommended by the state Board of Education, it did improve them for the first time in 30 years.

Teacher evaluation. Delegate Steve Landes, outgoing chair of the House Education Committee, will write a letter on behalf of VEA to the state Board of Education asking them to make it a priority to revise the current teacher evaluation model, which is still too dependent on standardized test scores.

School safety. Measures passed that strengthened threat assessment teams and added training for school resource officers.

So, while we still have much ground to cover, take a moment and congratulate yourselves! ●



Roanoke's Doherty Earns Teaching Award

Nicole Doherty, a Roanoke Education Association member, has been named the 2019 outstanding teacher of American history by the Virginia Daughters of the American Revolution. She's taught at Patrick Henry High School, which is also her alma mater, for 15 years.

Three Association members have been named Outstanding Economic Educators by the Virginia Council on Economic Education and the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. They are **Dianna Alger** of the Page County Education Association, **Malinda Hogan** of the Spotsylvania Education Association, and **Patricia Winch** of the Fairfax Education Association. In addition, **Gary Greenwood** of the Fluvanna Education Association and **Christine Pedersen** of the New Kent Education Association were honored for developing outstanding original economics curriculum materials.

Chesterfield Education Association member **Melodie Henderson**, a special education teacher at Manchester High School, was featured in a recent issue of NEA Today, the magazine of the NEA, which reaches the union's more than 3 million members. Henderson lent her experience and expertise to a story entitled, "Are Schools Prepared to Tackle the Mental Health Crisis?"

VEA-Retired member **Karen Whetzel** has been chosen to continue as chair of the Shenandoah County School Board. She's been on the board for 10 years, chairing it since 2016.

Jessica M. Jones, a Pittsylvania Education Association member and agricultural education teacher and FFA advisor at Tunstall High School, has been appointed to Virginia's Milk Commission by Gov. Ralph Northam. ●



DON'T WASTE YOUR INFLUENCE! "YOU MIGHT BE THE ONLY ONE WHO TELLS THEM THAT THEY'RE GREATER THAN THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES. YOU MIGHT

BE THE ONLY ONE TO TELL THEM THAT IT'S NOT ABOUT WHERE THEY COME FROM BUT WHERE THEY WANT TO END UP."

— Manny Scott, one of the original "Freedom

In the Cards?

Poker is an environment, like a lot of situations in life, where you have incomplete information. You're dealing with this uncertainty, but you have to make a decision: "How do I quantify the



uncertainty and decide in the best way possible, given what I know and what I don't know?"

It forces you to deal with other people.

It forces you to recognize emotions in other people and in yourself. It forces you to control those emotions. It forces you to actually think in probabilities, to quantify risk, to make decisions based on the information that you have—to quantify uncertainty.

I would say [to students], "OK, now we have this framework. Let's apply it to everything else for learning. Remember at the poker table when this happened and what you did? Why don't you do it now?"

Maria Konnikova, author of Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes and a professional poker player, on why poker is a "brilliant teaching tool" ●

How to Help When You Think Drugs are Involved

We all know that opioids have become a dangerous public health problem. As if our young people didn't have enough substances to tempt them. If you suspect that any of your students may be affected by opioids, alcohol, or other substances, here's some ways you can help them, from the U.S.

Department of Education:

- Find out what kinds of resources are available in your school or division, so you know where to turn for help.
- Talk with school counselors, nurses, and administrators to find out how best to support students for whom you are concerned.
- Learn to recognize the signs of opioid, alcohol, and substance abuse so you can refer students appropriately.
- Integrate basic alcohol and drug prevention skill-building into everyday teaching so student can learn to:
 - Make good decisions
 - Solve problems
 - Become more assertive and learn refusal skills
 - Be more self-aware
 - Build positive relationships
- Help students learn coping and stress management skills such as:
 - Self-control
 - Standing up to peer pressure
 - Time management
 - Dealing with difficult situations like conflict or loss
 - Setting goals
- Talk with students about opioid, alcohol and substance abuse. ●



85%

percent of the jobs today's learners will do in 2030 haven't been invented yet, according to the U.S. Department of Education. ●

Step Away from Those Devices (except for homework)

Know anything about Screen-Free Week? It's an annual celebration of life outside computer, television, and game screens, during which kids are encouraged to read, play, be active, create, think, and spend time with family and friends.

The event, which began in the 1990s, is endorsed by numerous organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association. The 2019 dates are April 29-May 5.

Screen-Free Week is about taking a break from digital entertainment. Devices, of course, can still be used for schoolwork, but the week can be used to loosen our dependence on screens and also to be free of excessive marketing.

To learn how to get involved, host an event, or to get additional resources, visit www.screenfree.org. ●



"You must attend class every day. There is no 'unsubscribe' option."

Keep Your Ears Open

Students want to feel heard. The times that students have found me unlikeable usually go back to my not listening. There were times my students did not understand what I was teaching, and they told me that. I heard what they said but I wasn't really listening. In my mind, I thought it came down to their not trying hard



enough. Now that I have more experience, I know if a lot of students are telling me they don't understand I need to listen.

It could be that I presented it in a way that just didn't click with them, or possibly it conflicted with the way they had been taught previously. Also, they could be missing some previous skill and that was preventing them from understanding. Regardless, I have learned to listen when my instincts tell me they don't understand.

Also, [I must be] willing to stop what I'm doing and listen when students want to talk. It is so hard to stop in the middle of something (especially if it's something that you need to turn in at the end of the day) and give a student your full attention. I have a few students that regularly come into class a few minutes early so they chat with me a little and I'm training myself to stop what I'm doing and give them my full attention. It's so easy to get tunnel vision and ignore the students who are the reason I'm here doing what I do. ●

— Michelle Russell (@michel1erussell1), a high school math teacher in Alabama

Source: Middleweb.com

Photo and illustrations by iStock

Benefits of Climate Change?

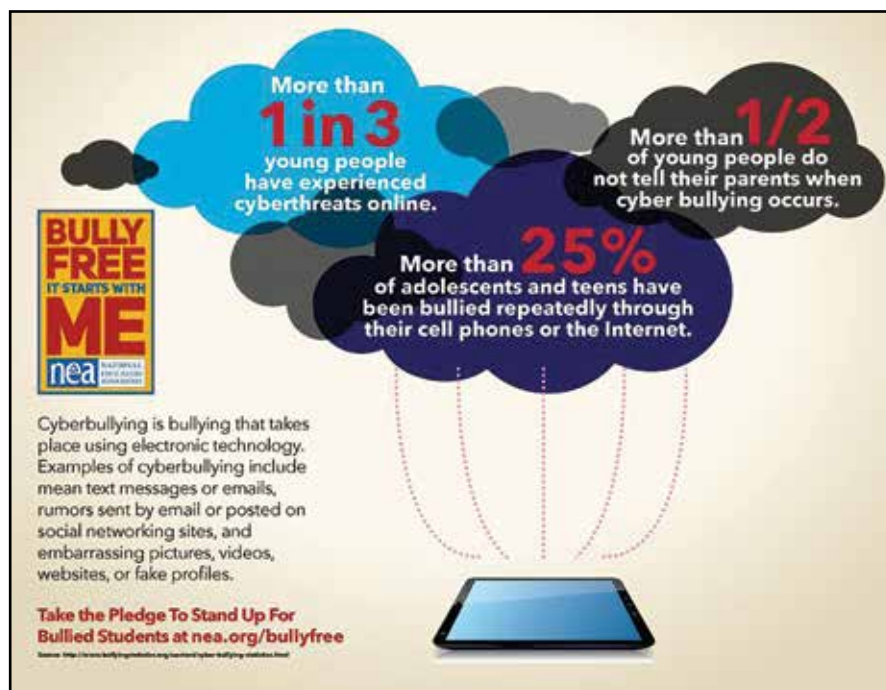
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— Michelle Russell (@michel1erussel1), a high school math teacher in Alabama

Source: Middleweb.com



Your Move?

"So many of our students are natural critical thinkers. They are constantly having to strategically think through their daily lives to overcome challenges and barriers.

"Chess represents discipline, thoughtfulness, strategic and critical thinking, patience, and mindfulness — all of the qualities we want to instill in our students.

"Our students are brilliant, but we do not always provide them with multiple opportunities to demonstrate that brilliance. Chess is another pathway we are offering students to shine." ●

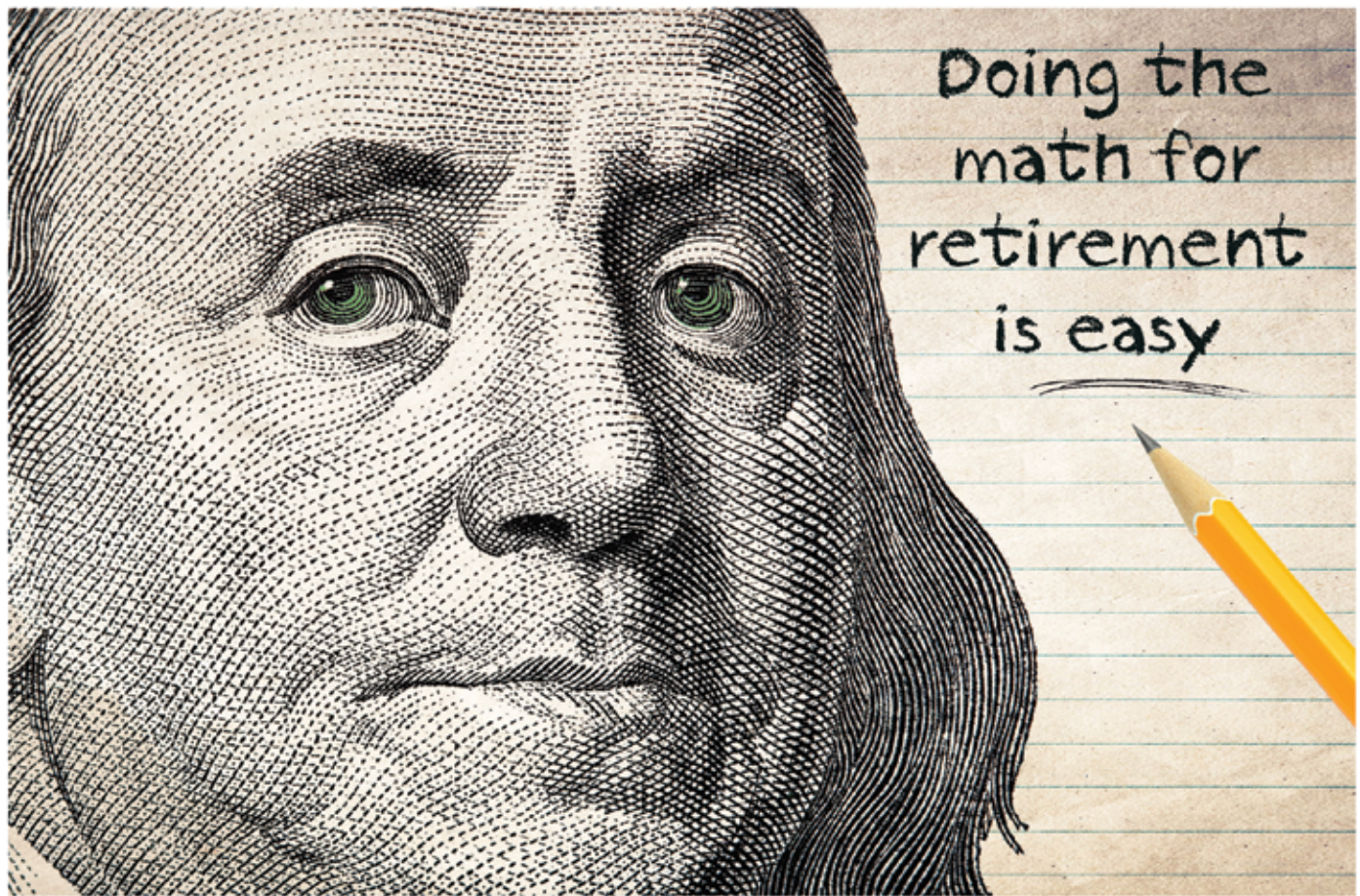
— Detroit Superintendent Nikolai Vitti, on why he's had city schools make substantial investments in chess clubs.



Study: The Arts are Good for Students

Public schools in Houston have been offering elementary and middle school students expanded arts opportunities through the city's Arts Access Initiative, and a recent study shows it seems to be paying off.

Researchers from Texas A&M University and the University of Missouri, after a citywide inventory, say they've found statistically significant positive results in three categories: reducing disciplinary infractions, increasing writing achievement, and bolstering students' level of compassion. ●



Three ways the **NEA Retirement Program** helps you grow and protect your savings.

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- 2. INVESTMENT OPTIONS:** Build your nest egg, protect your savings, enjoy a steady stream of retirement income — we have solutions for every stage of your life and career.
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EXPERIENCE MORE, PAY LESS.

There are no reservations about the amazing travel discounts you can get with VEA Access to Savings Program. Jet-set with incredible savings on hotels, car rentals, condos and resorts. As an added bonus, you can make the most of your travels by using your Access deals for your restaurants, theme park tickets, concerts and more.

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Search and download "My Deals" from the App Store or Google Play, then register using these codes: 100891-Your VEA Membership I.D. * Please include the zeros in the beginning of your I.D. number.

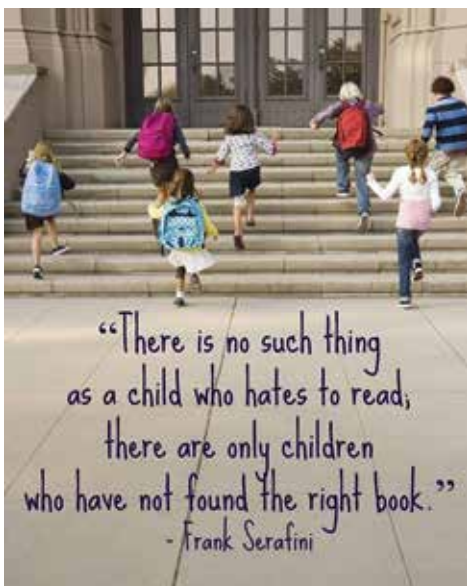
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Transient Students Keep Teachers on the Move, Too

— Courtney Cutright

When a student joins your classroom midyear, the potential for upsetting the established flow arises.

When a student joins an already packed class, the last one of the day—the one plagued by good-natured adolescence chattiness—there are sure to be some bumps.

When that student has been bounced around among about a dozen elementary and middle schools by the time he reaches seventh grade—it's like someone dumping ice water on you at 3 a.m.

Meet Luke, larger than life in a prepubescent body with big brown eyes and a charming personality. He is not one bit reserved. Luke didn't display the usual first-day-at-a-new-school-behavior of observing his surroundings before showing his true colors. He was more like "Heyyy! I am ready to partyyy!"

I probably had the look of a deer caught in headlights. I spent about 10 minutes taking it all in before I excused myself to gather background information from the guidance counselor who enrolled him.

When Luke arrived, the keeper of our school's records had not received a file on him, but we could figure out that he'd been out of school several weeks (maybe months) because of issues with enrollment paperwork.

During that time, Luke said he was staying up all night playing video games and sleeping all day. You can imagine how much of an adjustment it took to get his days and nights back on track. He'd come from an environment of limited structure, and I worried how he would respond to my rules and expectations.

Luke's arrival definitely disrupted daily operations at first. He blurted, could not remain seated, and danced when he walked in and out of the room. He wanted to leave multiple times in the period to go to his locker, get a drink of water, or use the restroom. He did not engage appropriately

with his new classmates. He tended to be combative with other boys; he antagonized the girls.

I was administering a formative assessment on Luke's second day, but he had not been issued a laptop yet. The rest of the class was wrapping up a unit on poetry by creating an electronic portfolio of poems and taking a test on a novel. These were not assignments he could know, not having read the book first or accessed a computer.

It took about two weeks, and an incredible amounts of patience from the other students and me, but Luke found his place and settled in to it.

I began to assess his academic abilities once his behaviors were under control, expecting to find significant deficits because of his transiency. Because he'd changed schools so frequently and missed instructional time, I expected him to read below grade level. He did struggle slightly with decoding and fluency, but his reading skills did not seem to be significantly deficient compared to grade-level peers.

A 2015 study by the University of Colorado at Boulder's National Education Policy Center concluded that changing schools frequently can be detrimental to "normal child and adolescent development by disrupting relationships with peers and teachers as well as altering a student's educational program." Frequent or chronic mobility can affect standardized test scores and graduation rates.

In a national sample of students who began kindergarten in 1998 and attended fifth grade in 2004, about 42 percent reported changing schools once during the elementary years. Another 24 percent reported changing schools twice or more.

I know that transiency among students is not a new problem in urban areas. Its impact may not be fully understood, but it certainly can be felt in my district. I know that I attended elementary and secondary schools in the same district and was surrounded by many of the same students from kindergarten through graduation. My family had strong connections to the faculty and staff of the schools I attended. I think that made a positive difference on the education I received and my attitude toward education.

I seem to have more transfer students this year than I've noticed in the past. It can be a challenge to integrate students into the classroom midyear. After all, it takes time for me to get to know new students—and in a full year I only have 180 days. ●



Cutright (courtcut@gmail.com), a member of the Roanoke County Education Association, teaches English at Northside Middle School.



FY 2018 DISTRIBUTION OF

Lottery Proceeds to Virginia's K-12 Public Schools

This list, provided by the Virginia Department of Education, details the \$606 million of Lottery proceeds funding available during Fiscal Year 2018. Localities receive these funds through programs, such as class-size reduction, school breakfast, early reading intervention, etc., as authorized by the General Assembly in support of K-12 public education.

Accomack	\$3,360,261.46	Dickenson	\$1,400,404.25	Lancaster	\$505,574.03	Pulaski	\$2,320,775.67
Albemarle	\$4,085,992.83	Dinwiddie	\$2,423,514.56	Lee	\$2,324,815.67	Radford City	\$774,529.59
Alexandria City	\$3,269,037.17	Emporia City	\$927,472.89	Lexington City	\$133,269.14	Rappahannock	\$126,085.65
Alleghany	\$1,378,568.46	Essex	\$854,830.42	Loudoun	\$13,382,864.49	Richmond	\$994,257.76
Amelia	\$973,232.00	Fairfax	\$31,195,424.59	Louisa	\$2,178,912.66	Richmond City	\$17,313,139.53
Amherst	\$3,071,510.97	Fairfax City	\$208,069.95	Lunenburg	\$1,206,301.22	Roanoke	\$4,540,271.89
Appomattox	\$1,500,090.31	Falls Church City	\$248,876.63	Lynchburg City	\$7,193,524.47	Roanoke City	\$14,893,978.57
Arlington	\$4,159,494.18	Fauquier	\$2,330,655.43	Madison	\$1,002,986.80	Rockbridge	\$1,062,479.37
Augusta	\$5,756,071.39	Floyd	\$974,499.49	Manassas City	\$6,879,759.54	Rockingham	\$7,349,869.72
Bath	\$190,971.52	Fluvanna	\$1,768,869.00	Manassas Park City	\$3,481,272.68	Russell	\$3,766,872.70
Bedford	\$4,123,185.24	Franklin	\$4,555,726.77	Martinsville City	\$2,082,476.91	Salem City	\$1,803,292.26
Bland	\$300,376.46	Franklin City	\$1,291,267.00	Mathews	\$315,830.07	Scott	\$2,414,870.86
Botetourt	\$1,565,649.60	Frederick	\$5,576,138.86	Mecklenburg	\$2,542,753.36	Shenandoah	\$3,882,842.24
Bristol City	\$1,967,832.22	Fredericksburg City	\$1,421,971.96	Middlesex	\$371,675.07	Smyth	\$3,475,096.43
Brunswick	\$1,948,023.39	Galax City	\$1,112,803.32	Montgomery	\$4,370,433.30	Southampton	\$2,540,616.66
Buchanan	\$1,632,312.12	Giles	\$1,182,722.69	Nelson	\$849,125.48	Spotsylvania	\$9,845,554.59
Buckingham	\$1,452,744.37	Gloucester	\$2,592,634.16	New Kent	\$846,405.45	Stafford	\$8,933,608.34
Buena Vista City	\$645,804.02	Goochland	\$414,261.79	Newport News City	\$26,195,018.60	Staunton City	\$2,380,955.70
Campbell	\$4,965,848.30	Grayson	\$1,084,522.45	Norfolk City	\$28,780,098.41	Suffolk City	\$9,242,329.68
Caroline	\$2,228,305.52	Greene	\$1,981,600.68	Northampton	\$1,180,779.64	Surry	\$270,755.00
Carroll	\$2,799,951.69	Greensville	\$1,268,292.24	Northumberland	\$380,086.81	Sussex	\$1,011,638.04
Charles City	\$350,436.04	Halifax	\$3,287,207.08	Norton City	\$512,274.20	Tazewell	\$3,321,754.74
Charlotte	\$1,228,673.38	Hampton City	\$15,578,450.85	Nottoway	\$2,054,585.46	Virginia Beach City	\$32,798,563.38
Charlottesville City	\$2,641,149.06	Hanover	\$4,334,022.00	Orange	\$2,620,978.43	Warren	\$2,262,809.20
Chesapeake City	\$21,118,442.57	Harrisonburg City	\$6,011,699.37	Page	\$2,471,730.83	Washington	\$4,096,821.56
Chesterfield	\$20,431,325.82	Henrico	\$21,575,722.58	Patrick	\$1,488,526.57	Waynesboro City	\$2,298,314.06
Clarke	\$429,546.87	Henry	\$7,789,432.77	Petersburg City	\$5,169,191.46	West Point Town	\$488,377.85
Colonial Beach	\$423,439.44	Highland	\$816,778.84	Pittsylvania	\$5,960,165.05	Westmoreland	\$1,266,891.91
Colonial Heights City	\$1,322,172.86	Hopewell City	\$4,159,644.51	Poquoson City	\$670,606.29	Williamsburg City	\$260,870.15
Covington City	\$654,171.45	Isle of Wight	\$2,588,754.21	Portsmouth City	\$14,075,809.16	Winchester City	\$3,094,499.03
Craig	\$473,186.51	James City	\$2,792,413.33	Powhatan	\$1,237,457.42	Wise	\$4,259,543.46
Culpeper	\$4,347,659.61	King and Queen	\$573,812.20	Prince Edward	\$1,555,172.33	Wythe	\$2,359,867.56
Cumberland	\$992,561.38	King George	\$1,661,515.46	Prince George	\$3,024,951.86	York	\$3,281,827.83
Danville City	\$5,970,702.95	King William	\$1,128,302.54	Prince William	\$51,327,614.01		

(FY 1999 through FY 2018)

Total Virginia Lottery profits generated for Virginia's K-12 public schools since 1999: MORE THAN \$9 BILLION!

**Funds are not necessarily distributed in the year earned, but this list accurately represents what was distributed in Fiscal Year 2018. Lottery profits earned each fiscal year can be seen in the financial statements available at valottery.com.*

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