

## Education for a Lifetime



***Governor Warner's Senior Year Plus initiative transforms the senior year of high school, offering new options for students to get a jump on their college careers or achieve an industry certification to enable them to get a better, higher-paying job.***

The senior year of high school should be a transition year that launches students toward success in college or a career in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy. The traditional high school experience works well for many students: they earn a high school diploma and go on to college, or they earn a diploma and an industry certification and enter the workforce right after graduation.

But far too often, the traditional route culminates in a senior year in which students merely mark time. Students "check out" academically after college acceptance, and those with no college plans endure a final year of high school without the necessary thought to attaining job skills.

Many students graduate from high school with more credits than are required for an advanced diploma, but they fail to use these extra credits towards their next degree. Other students begin their senior year without plans to attend college, but they finish high school without the skills needed to enter the workforce.

While a high school diploma is a minimum credential for any career, economists have shown that college degrees or other career credentials mean better-paying jobs. The

Governor's Senior Year Plus initiative offers two options that will better prepare students for life after high school, while reducing the cost of college tuition for families.

### Path to Industry Certification

✦ The Governor's Senior Year Plus initiative encourages students who are not college bound to continue working towards high school graduation while pursuing technical training for a selected industry certification, such as a Licensed Practical Nurse or Auto Body and Collision Technician. Often, this technical preparation will continue after graduation from high school.

✦ Participating students and their parents will sign a *Student Compact* agreeing that the student will complete high school and then enroll in further technical training to acquire the appropriate skills and certifications needed to enter a higher-wage career.

✦ Typically, students will continue to take industry-specific training at their local community college during the summer and fall after graduation. Up to one semester of technical

*(continued on the reverse)*

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2005 – raising the current average of 10,000 per year to 20,000 per year by 2005.

✦ Doubling the number of GEDs awarded in two years will be accomplished through two major initiatives:

1. Targeted marketing efforts across the Commonwealth aimed at educating adults about the financial and personal benefits to getting a GED.

A statewide partnership between NASCAR, NASCAR racing teams, and the Commonwealth to show workers how to “accelerate your earnings” by getting a GED.

2. Creation of pilot “Fast Track GED” programs in at least five regions of the state by 2004. These pilot programs will identify individuals most likely to benefit from a GED and encourage them to participate in an intensive, three-to-four month GED training program.

### Career Readiness Certificate

Currently, Virginia does not have a portable credential that confirms to employers that an individual possesses basic workplace skills. The Governor’s Initiative will create a new Career Readiness Certificate that will inform all employers that the Certificate holder has reached an employer-recognized level of workforce literacy.

✦ The Certificate will ensure employers that the worker has achieved a competency level in several basic skills areas that all jobs require, including reading, math, writing, and locating information.

✦ All Virginians will be able to earn a Career Readiness Certificate by taking basic skills assessment tests administered in a variety of settings – One-Stop Career Development Centers, community colleges, local depart-

ments of Social Services, and other appropriate locations.

Several other states have created similar certificates to objectively assess a person’s work skills, and the program has wide acceptance in the business community. The Governor will work with governors in neighboring states in an effort to expand the initiative so that the same Career Readiness Certificate would be recognized and accepted by employers in a multi-state region.

### Streamline Workforce Services

Building on Governor Warner’s efforts during the past year, the Governor’s Workforce Initiative will strengthen the delivery system for workforce training and services.

✦ The current system of 22 programs in 10 agencies spread across three secretariats is an unworkable model for the future. Among those 22 programs, there are overlaps in service and some of the 22 programs are not performing as well as they could.

✦ The Governor’s Initiative will involve all the stakeholders in an effort to develop a workforce training delivery system that is keyed to the job requirements of our employers and that will give our workers competitive skills training for a lifetime of work. By streamlining the system, the Governor’s Initiative will benefit both employers and employees and ensure that Virginia’s workforce is well prepared for the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/Initiatives/Ed4Life/>

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