

April 14, 2016 - SCS Featured in VSBA Showcases for Success Directory

Staunton City Schools Featured in Annual VSBA Showcases for Success Directory

Staunton, VA – The Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) has released its 20th annual VSBA Showcases for Success Directory, highlighting successful K-12 programs in Virginia’s public schools. Staunton City Schools is one of 52 school divisions from across the Commonwealth that has programs featured in the directory. This year's featured programs highlight successful initiatives related to *Workforce Readiness* and *Career & Technical Education*. Staunton City Schools is pleased to have three programs included in this year’s directory:

- **BETA Learning Academy** (Contact Jennifer Morris, Principal, Shelburne Middle School, 332-3930)
The BETA Learning Academy at Shelburne Middle School is for 8th grade students. BETA stands for Build, Explore, Tinker, and Apply. BETA combines 8th grade science with the Project Lead the Way Gateway program in a two-hour block. BETA’s curriculum is technology infused and built around hands-on, project-based learning in all subjects where students learn through inquiry and application. Students are expected to document and reflect on their work, and apply new knowledge and skills in all classes. Eighth grade SOL pass rate data for 2014-15 shows that the BETA students’ pass rates were higher than non-Beta students on the Science 8 SOL (+23%), the Math 8 SOL (+17%), and the Reading 8 SOL (+27%). This program prepares students for careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields by teaching students critical job skills in a workplace environment where collaboration, hard work, and creativity are essential. Jennifer Morris, Principal at Shelburne Middle School said, “BETA empowers our students as critical thinkers because it gives them additional tools to address problems in unique ways. Students apply design-thinking, which they are learning in technology, to real-world projects in language arts, physical science and world studies. The integration of their learning engages students in really powerful ways.”
- **BMX Restoration** (Contact Brett Peters, Career Coach, Robert E. Lee High School, 332-3926)
This program works with donated bikes that are in need of repairs and new parts. Students in the program work to clean, fix and rebuild the bikes to make them rideable. The bikes are then donated to community groups. The focus of the BMX Restoration program, also known as LeeWay Bikes, is to encourage interest in skilled trades. “This project encourages the students to use critical thinking skills to seek out different ways to solve problems in order to make the necessary repairs – all while practicing lots of patience,” said Brett Peters, Career Coach and supervisor of this program.
- **Project SEARCH** (Contact Dr. Jelisa Wolfe, Executive Director of Student Services, 332-3934)
Augusta Health Project SEARCH is a collaborative effort among three school divisions: Staunton, Augusta and Waynesboro, as well as the Virginia Department of Education, Augusta Health, Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), and Career Support Services. An embedded teacher and job coach work alongside 18-21 year old students with active IEPs in multiple internship sites within the hospital with an end goal of competitive employment for every student. Students are responsible for the same duties as full-time hospital employees, including completing employee orientation and background checks. This is our first year,

with nine students enrolled. After the first internship, one student has been competitively employed by the hospital. Students have demonstrated consistent gains in self advocacy, communication, working independently and as part of a group, and organizational skills. Students begin and end each day with classroom instruction covering topics such as money management, self-advocacy, and how to interact with co-workers. Dr. Jelisa Wolfe, Executive Director of Student Services commented, "Project SEARCH provides an invaluable opportunity for our students to enter the work force with the experience, confidence and skills necessary for long-term success."

"SCS is proud to be included once again in the VSBA Showcases for Success Directory. Our staff are committed to engaging students and integrating technology at all levels," said Dr. Linda Reviea, Superintendent. The full VSBA Showcases for Success directory is available at www.vsba.org/showcases. It includes division-wide programs, as well as those at elementary, middle, and high school levels.

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