



# Community Connections

*Investing in Virginia's Future  
Workforce by Investing in  
Public Schools Today!*



# MEET OUR TEAM



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Director of the  
Virginia Veteran and  
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**Debbie Linn**

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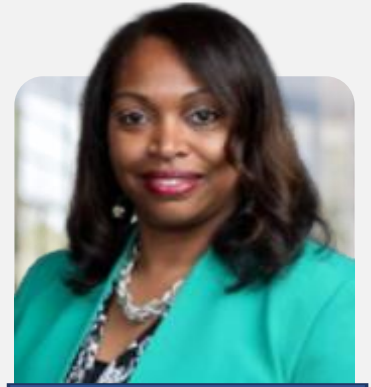
Virginia Museum of  
Fine Arts



**Ponnette Smith**

Director of Talent  
Management and State  
Human Resources Policy

Department of Human  
Resource Management



**Alana Tucker**

Director of Program  
Operations

Virginia Department of  
Social Services

# The Vision

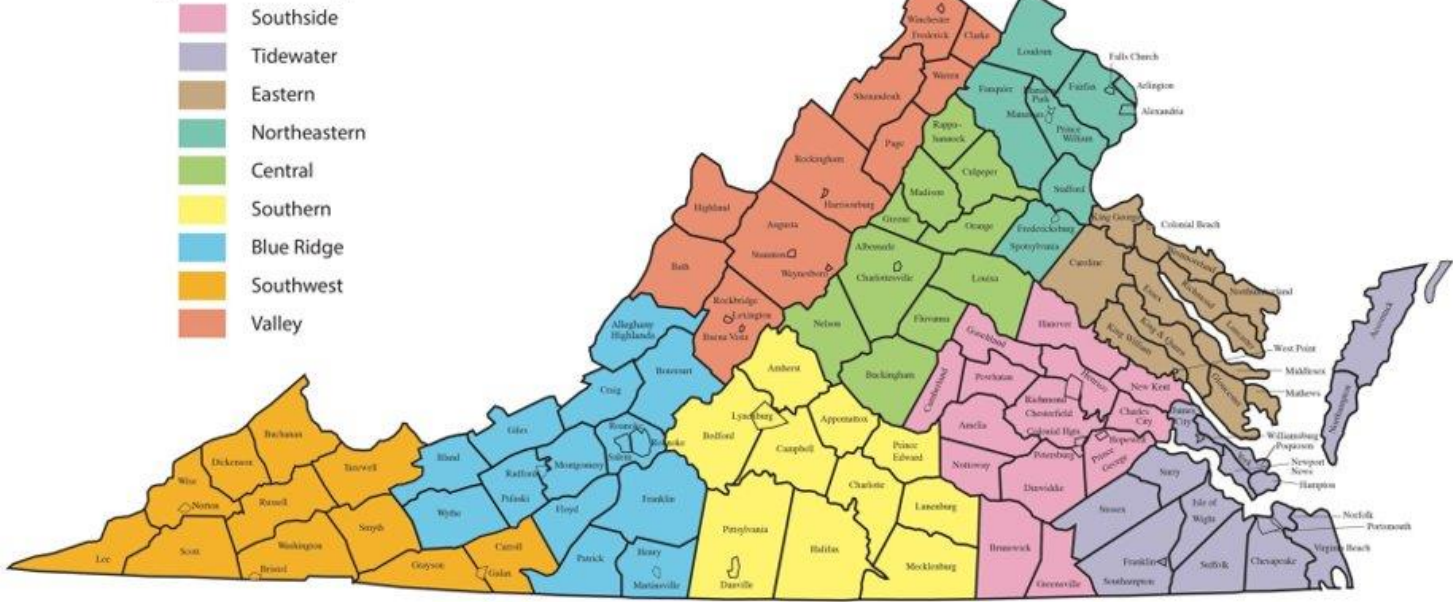
Address the unique needs and challenges of under-resourced rural public schools by connecting Virginia's workforce to communities in need.

*"Negative depictions of life in rural America can shake the confidence of promising young people....From criticisms about how they talk to how they think, the perpetuation of stereotypes can lead children to doubt their own potential."*



# RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN VIRGINIA

## Virginia School Boards Association Regional Map



School Divisions Map from the Virginia School Board Association

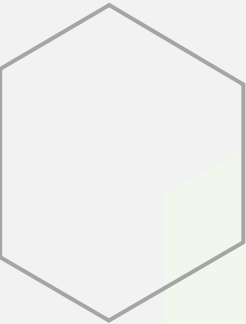
**132 school districts**

- "Rural" School : definition relates to location from urbanized area and population density.
- Approximately 70 rural school districts (out of 132 total) in Virginia.



# Why Focus on Rural Schools

*"Small, rural school divisions across Virginia continue to face declining student enrollments, difficulty competing for high-quality teachers, inadequate facility and capital projects funding and pressure from unfunded mandates at both state and federal levels, placing them at a significant financial disadvantage with larger school divisions."*

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- **School-aged children living in poverty:**      **Rural 14.0%**      **State 11.1%**
  - **Eligible for free and reduced lunch:**      **Rural 53.9%**      **State 45.6%**
  
  - **2,574 fewer teachers/instructors**
  - **1,125 fewer support staff**



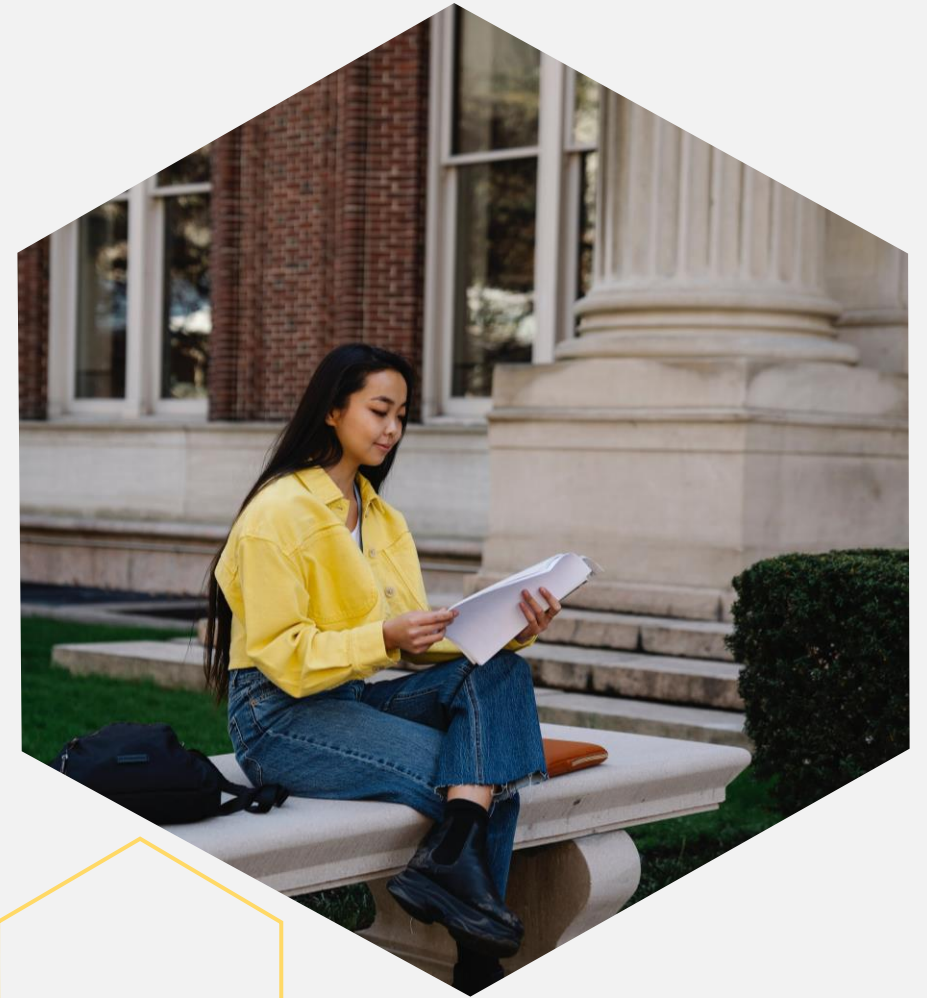
**OUR GOAL**

## Pilot Project

- Gather input from schools and community stakeholders
- Focus on high schools
- Enhance current and future interest in state employment opportunities

# Pilot Structure

- Identification of school
- Needs assessment
- Design Program
- Implement Program
- Evaluate Program



# Beyond the Pilot: Building Hope

- Refine program based on evaluation
  - Assess use of volunteer hours
- Expand focus to include middle and elementary schools
- Connect with the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement







# Q&A





THANKS FOR ATTENDING