

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 50

Requesting the Board of Education to approve the revised Virginia's Workplace Readiness Skills and test. Report.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 16, 2010
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 10, 2010

WHEREAS, Virginia's Career and Technical Education (CTE) program is nationally recognized for its leadership in student attainment and in industry credentialing, and the program provides pathways for young people to attend college, secure good jobs, and become life long learners; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's CTE program offers wide-ranging and challenging courses that prepare Virginia students to continue their education and for direct entry into the workforce after graduation, often in emerging occupations essential to the Commonwealth's economy; and

WHEREAS, seventy percent of CTE completers pursue some form of formal education after high school; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's Career and Technical Education programs are organized around 16 nationally recognized career clusters offering 79 career pathways that are designed to help students make informed career choices and solid academic plans; and

WHEREAS, in May 2009, the Virginia Commission on Youth conducted a gap analysis of career and technical education programs in the Commonwealth to identify shifting career and technical education needs, and found that (i) career and technical education programs are very effective in keeping students connected to and helping them succeed in high school, (ii) a strong CTE program is critical to the economic well-being of Virginia, and (iii) Virginia's Workplace Readiness Skills were effective in preparing students for the workplace; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) were identified through extensive research conducted in 1997 with Virginia employers by the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center, and mirror findings from national studies which state that entry level skills most desired by employers include basic reading and writing, a strong work ethic and positive attitude, communicative skills, teamwork, and self-presentation; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's 13 Workplace Readiness Skills are fully integrated as performance standards in all CTE courses; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's Workplace Readiness Skills help teachers and students understand the demands of the workplace and assist students in achieving validated competencies considered essential to the successful pursuit of work and academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, to verify student mastery of Virginia's Workplace Readiness Skills and to allow students to obtain verified credit for achieving validated competencies, the Board of Education has approved the use of the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) exam, accompanied by one of three Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC3) tests to measure technological competence; and

WHEREAS, students must complete both the NOCTI WRS test and an IC3 test for the reimbursement of school divisions by the Commonwealth for the costs of testing, and a single, unified test would be ideal, and work to create one test is underway; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, the process of refining and expanding the list of Virginia's Workplace Readiness Skills from 13 to 21 skills commenced, and the revised list will be fully integrated into the CTE curriculum in the fall of 2010; and

WHEREAS, a revised NOCTI WRS to replace the NOCTI WRS + IC3 tests is scheduled for completion and presentation to the Board of Education in January 2011, for immediate use at the conclusion of the 2010-2011 school year and school divisions will be reimbursed by the Commonwealth for administering the test; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education will address the relationship between Virginia's Workplace Readiness Skills and the Commonwealth's Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) through the academic and career plan process; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Board of Education be requested to approve the revised Virginia's Workplace Readiness Skills and test.

The Board of Education shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary and report of its progress in meeting the request of this resolution no later than the first day of the 2011 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary and report shall be submitted for publication as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be

posted on the General Assembly's website.