Trailblazers
Stepping Up To A Nontraditional Challenge

VA EXCHANGE TEAMS
FOSTERING COLLABORATION

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Who are the VA Exchange Teams?
Each of the 8 Superintendent Regions are represented by an Exchange Team.
Sponsoring counties:
- Region 1 - Richmond City
- Region 2 - Southampton
- Region 3 - Gloucester
- Region 4 - Clarke
- Region 5 - Albemarle
- Region 6 - Roanoke
- Region 7 - Smyth
- Region 8 - Prince Edward

Developing a Learning Community

What do we do?
- Connect
- Engage
- Relate
- Foster Information Fluency
- Foster Digital Literacy

How do we do it?
- Organize
- Online Learning
- Interact and Collaborate
- Support each other
- Publish our work
- Share "Best Practices"

CURRIKI.ORG
WIKI-CENTRIC SUPPORT GROUPS
- Collaborative authoring
- Online Publishing
- Promotes communication
- Promotes Collaboration

Online Curriculum:
- Event Planning and Materials
- Completers - Retaining students
- Resources
- Career Fair Planning and Materials
- "Best Practices" step-by-step guides
- Educational Forum

Nontraditional Resources for Virginia's CTE Professionals.

Nontraditional Careers for Virginia Students

Our mission at Trailblazers is to support Career and Technical Education professionals as they strive to increase the enrollment and completion rates of underrepresented students participating in nontraditional programs.

Finding a job is tough and students need high-level skills to succeed in today's job market. CTE gives students high-value training that will enable them to compete in the workforce and succeed in higher education. Students also need the chance to earn certifications that employers respect.

Why are nontraditional careers important?

What about nontraditional careers? Why are they important? Many nontraditional careers (those in which more than 25% of workers are of one gender) provide good job opportunities and are vital to Virginia's economic future. But students and parents are still unaware or apprehensive of the opportunities available in nontraditional career fields. Often stereotypes associated with a particular career field make students reluctant to consider them.

As a result, males are seriously underrepresented in education and health care careers; and, females are seriously underrepresented in STEM & skilled trades careers. The Virginia Employment Commission has forecast that these jobs will be in high demand throughout the next decade.

The table below lists the 15 fastest-growing jobs and the 15 jobs expected to have the most openings from 2006 to 2016, according to recently released projections from the VEC. Students can prepare, or begin preparing, for almost all of these jobs through CTE courses, as the table shows. Most of these promising jobs are identified as nontraditional. In other words, by the choices they make in high school many students are missing out on the most promising jobs.

Trailblazers is here to help you change that.

Virginia Employment 2006-16
CTE courses preparing students for the careers in bold are nontraditional.

Fast Growing Jobs 2006-16		Jobs With The Most Openings	
Home Health Aides	74%	Retail Salespersons	6,161
Personal & Home Care Aides	68%	**Office Clerks, General**	4,640
Network Analysts	65%	Waiters & Waitresses	3,856
Marriage & Family Therapists	59%	Customer Service Reps	3,472
Software Engineers, Apps	56%	**Food Prep & Serving Wkrs**	2,994
Veterinary Techs	56%	Management Analysts	2,420
Survey Researchers	54%	**Computer Engineers, Apps**	2,348
Industrial Engineers	51%	**Janitors & Cleaners**	2,348
Veterinarians	51%	Registered Nurses	2,345
Social Service Assistants	48%	**Computer Systems Analysts**	2,250
Interpreters & Translators	47%	**Bookkeeping & Clerks**	1,823
Financial Analysts	43%	Accountants	1,771
Database Administrators	42%	Laborers & Material Movers	1,769
Computer Systems Analysts	41%	**Receptionists**	1,401
Physical Therapist Assistants	41%	**Computer Engrs, Software**	1,384

Source: Virginia Workforce Connection, www.vawc.virginia.gov/

Projects and Professional Development.

Trailblazers 2008-09 Initiatives

Virginia Exchange Teams Working across school divisions to develop and share ideas, resources, and to promote professional development and collaboration

Online Professional Development Curriki.org, an open-source platform creating a Learning Community
VAExchangeTeam.groups.curriki.org

Monthly Newsletter News about Nontraditional issues and events

Parent Brochure Promoting CTE to parents of elementary children (a joint project with Virginia PTA)

In-school events Resources and support for planning events to recruit and sustain nontraditional students

Trailblazers Website Resources online for the nontraditional challenge
CTETrailblazers.org

A good way to introduce students to career possibilities and the CTE courses that will help them get there

Career Information Fairs:

A Career Information Fair has two objectives: 1) introduce students to possible future career opportunities, and 2) help them learn about and later enroll in appropriate CTE courses. Organize your Fair and student activities to give students a clear picture of careers and link them to specific CTE courses for which they can enroll. Read more about Career Information Fairs and get supporting materials from our website: www.ctetrailblazers.org/careerfairs

Organizing Exhibits

1. Make a Guidance Station the first stop in the Career Fair.

- Have a guidance counselor and knowledgeable teachers by the door where students enter (Middle school Fairs should have a counselor who is knowledgeable about high school courses whenever possible).
- Hand out our *Career Cluster Map*, *Interest Survey*, or other career materials. Direct students to exhibits that interest them.
- Distribute information about your school's CTE courses and about course registration. Brochures about individual courses are useful. So is a single page handout listing the courses available to the students.

2. Arrange exhibits and activities in Career Clusters.

- Group exhibits together by career cluster to help students understand how courses and careers go together.
- Make a sign board for each cluster. List several typical careers in this cluster and the CTE courses that your students can take to prepare for them.
- There are 16 career clusters in Virginia. You do n*ot* have to prepare exhibits for all of them.
- If possible, a CTE teacher should attend each exhibit or cluster area. Teachers can answer questions, explain career opportunities, and encourage students to enroll.

3. Help exhibitors to advise students about careers and clusters

- Give each exhibitor our *Advice for Exhibitors*. Ask them to think about careers at their company or organization and the best way for students to prepare for them.

4. Encourage exhibitors to bring hands-on activities.

- These activities can be very simple—trying on a firefighters helmet, listening with a stethoscope, using CAD software to create a layout of the student's room, creating a marketing slogan (with a prize for the best one), puzzles (word finds, crossword, etc.

5. Link the Career Fair to class registration

- Hold your Fair shortly before the class registration period.
- On the day of the Fair, make announcements, distribute handouts, display posters, etc, explaining that the Fair is the opportunity for students to learn about the courses they need to achieve their career goals.

6. Encourage nontraditional enrollment.

- Ask this year's nontraditional students to attend your exhibit and help recruit others. Pay special attention to students who visit exhibits that are nontraditional for their gender and make them feel welcome.

Student Activities

1. Prepare students for the event in advance.

- Use classroom time immediately before the fair to explain to students that they are attending a career fair to learn about career options and the the courses they need to enroll in to achieve their career goals.
- Review interest inventory and other Guidance activities from student portfolios. Use our *Career Fair KWL Lesson Plan* with students to identify career clusters to explore.

2. Take students to the Fair

- Begin at the Guidance Station. Help students use the Activity sheets that are part of the *Career Fair Lesson Plan*

3. Review the Fair in class afterwards to solidfied what they have learned

- Complete our *in-class activities* with students in which they write about what they discovered from the Fair and and develop a plan to pursue at least one career path. This activity meets SOL requirements. Add the work they complete to student portfolios.

  "I've come to believe that each of us has a personal calling that's as unique as a fingerprint - and that the best way to succeed is to discover what you love and then find a way to offer it to others in the form of service, working hard, and also allowing the energy of the universe to lead you.."
  Oprah Winfrey