

An Open Letter to the Virginia General Assembly and State Board of Education

Given the national shortage in technically skilled and certified employees, I am seeking your support of a General Assembly bill sponsored by Senator Frank Wagner and Delegate Chris Stolle. This bill allows school divisions that meet the minimal accreditation requirements to receive additional points in the school accreditation process when students successfully complete Virginia Board of Education-approved industry certifications and credentialing exams.

During the 2010-2011 school year, more than 36,700 students earned nationally recognized industry credentials.

The total quality and accreditation of a school should reflect the number of industry-credentialed graduates who are both college ready and career ready, equipped with the appropriate workforce skills at whatever point they seek employment. An accreditation process should take into account students' academic knowledge, accomplishment of graduation requirements, and successful completion of industry certifications, but should also document achievement of the rigorous and relevant educational preparation required for today's economy and workforce by recording technical skills attainment.

Businesses and industries recognize the importance of this bill as evidenced by the support of the Virginia Manufacturers Association and the Virginia Automotive Dealers Association.

I am in full support of this bill that allows school divisions meeting minimal accreditation requirements to receive additional points in the school accreditation process when students successfully complete Virginia Board of Education-approved industry certifications and credentialing exams. I am hopeful that you will back this bill and encourage others to support this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

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