

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION



THE OPPORTUNITY ENGINE



Student Spotlight

Braden Wilhelm, a senior at Northside High School and Building Trades student at Burton Center for Arts and Technology. Braden consistently goes the extra mile, volunteers for projects, and sets a great example by supporting younger students and embracing hands-on work. His dedication and enthusiasm make him a standout student in the Building Trades program.

IN THE WORKS



Senior Workforce Conference

March 19, 2026

The Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board is hosting a conference for select seniors at each local high school. This conference will offer workshops and resources for students entering the workforce after graduation.



Industry Insight Tour

April 8, 2026

In partnership with Roanoke County's office of Economic Development, we will be hosting a tour at Trivium Packaging for teachers and students to learn about great career opportunities for students right here in Roanoke County.



FBLA State Leadership Conference

April 10-11, 2026

Students across Roanoke County will be traveling to Reston, VA for the annual Future Business Leaders of America State Leadership Conference. Good luck to our Future Business Leaders!

Happy National CTE Month



February is National Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month, a time to celebrate the vital role CTE plays in preparing all students for success after graduation. CTE programs provide students with hands-on, real-world learning opportunities that connect classroom instruction to high-demand careers, whether students plan to enter the workforce, enlist in the military, attend community college, or continue on to a four-year institution. Our CTE offerings include training in areas such as health sciences, information technology, skilled trades, engineering, business, marketing, culinary arts, public safety, and many more—ensuring students can explore interests, build technical skills, and earn industry-recognized credentials. We celebrate CTE Month each February to highlight the impact of these programs, recognize the dedication of our CTE educators and partners, and reaffirm our commitment to providing students with meaningful pathways to college, career, and lifelong success.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace Project

Our Building Trades students recently joined forces with Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a national nonprofit committed to making sure no child sleeps on the floor by building and providing beds to children in need. During this service-focused event, students helped prepare and assemble beds for local families, putting their construction skills to work while supporting a meaningful cause. Through activities like measuring, cutting, and building bed frames alongside other volunteers, our students not only gained valuable hands-on experience but also contributed to a project that brings comfort and dignity to children in our community.



Teacher Feature

Meet Kristen Grisso, 2025 Golden Apple Teacher of the Year!

Kristen Grisso is a Marketing teacher at Cave Spring High School with a background in strategic communications and graphic design. A Liberty University graduate, she gained real-world experience working on marketing campaigns for major brands such as Meta and Coca-Cola before discovering her passion for teaching. Now in her fourth year, she engages students through hands-on, industry-aligned projects, oversees the school's social media, and serves as the DECA advisor. Above all, she is committed to building student confidence, leadership skills, and a supportive classroom environment that prepares students for their next steps.



"My goal as a teacher is to ensure that every student who walks into my classroom feels heard, seen, and valued. I want each of them to graduate confident and prepared for their next step, knowing they are capable of more than they ever imagined."

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Well that was interesting... the snow/ice-fest we experienced over the last month! Meantime we have been busy on multiple fronts in the CTE world. On January 22nd – just before the snow arrived – we had an exciting Registered Apprenticeship Showcase at the Berglund Center. Virginia Works' Director of Work-Based Learning, Jason Clark, attended the event and we had a chance to discuss upcoming opportunities and possibilities related to Registered Apprenticeship. It is always energizing to observe our students interacting with business and industry representatives to explore possible career-launching employment as an apprentice. The February 11th Industry Insight Tour at Branch was fabulous (thank you for hosting us, Branch!). Staff and students discovered the many aspects of the construction industry and the wide variety of careers that students can build towards. As always, the Industry Insight Tours are a great collaboration between RCPS CTE and Roanoke County Office of Economic Development! In addition, I traveled to Houston with three other RCPS staff to take part in Carnegie's Future of High School convening. It was an engaging time and it was satisfying to come away from the event knowing RCPS is leading the way, under Dr. Nicely's leadership, toward helping all students become Opportunity Ready!

Jason Suhr

Jason Suhr



See the latest updates at: www.rcps.us/RCCTC

Work-Based Learning News

Putting Learning to **Work!**

We have been hard at work launching the Registered Apprenticeship hiring season across Roanoke County Public Schools! Our Registered Apprenticeship Showcase was a tremendous success, with 20 businesses seeking candidates in skilled trades such as construction, machining, welding, childcare, culinary, automotive, and more. These partnerships continue to open doors for students to earn, learn, and gain valuable hands-on experience in high-demand fields.

To learn more about Registered Apprenticeship opportunities, visit www.rcps.us/studentapprentice.

We are also proud to be expanding our School-Based Enterprises (SBEs), a high-quality Work-Based Learning experience that allows students to design, manage, and operate real businesses while building leadership and career-ready skills alongside industry mentors. A special shoutout to Nathan Hunt and Bradley Hutchins at Hidden Valley High School for leading a thriving SBE that sells snacks and merchandise during the school day and has raised thousands of dollars to support their marketing program. We look forward to continuing to grow SBE opportunities for students across the division!

Please reach out to Amanda Painter (apainter@rcps.us) to get involved!



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