

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION



THE OPPORTUNITY ENGINE

Registered Apprenticeship



On May 8, 2026, the Roanoke Regional Registered Apprenticeship Collaboration — which includes Roanoke County Public Schools, Roanoke City Public Schools, Salem City Schools, and Botetourt County Public Schools — proudly recognized 44 students during the annual Registered Apprenticeship Signing Event for their recent hiring into the workforce as registered apprentices. Registered Apprenticeship is a hands-on career pathway that allows students to earn a paycheck while gaining valuable on-the-job training, related classroom instruction, and industry-recognized credentials in high-demand career fields. The annual signing event celebrates these students as they officially commit to beginning their careers with local business and industry partners, highlighting the strong collaboration between regional school divisions, workforce development, and industry throughout the Roanoke Valley.



Special thanks to Varney Inc, Tread Corporation, Western Virginia Water Authority, Integer, and the Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board for sponsoring the reception dinner at the Registered Apprenticeship Signing Event. Their generosity provided a complimentary buffet meal for all 44 apprentices, their families, business partners and dignitaries as we celebrated this exciting milestone.

Awards

Congratulations to Cesilee Lineberry, marketing teacher at Northside High School, on being named the RCPS High School Red Apple Award winner. Presented annually by Roanoke County Public Schools and the RCPS Education Foundation, this honor recognizes outstanding educators who exemplify excellence in teaching and make a lasting impact on students and the school community. We are proud to have her as part of the CTE team!



Northside High School student Alan Lam earned 6th place in the Human Resource Management Event at the DECA International Career Development Conference in Atlanta, marking a first in school history. A four-year Marketing and DECA student and active member of the DECA Leadership Team, Alan has consistently demonstrated strong leadership, professionalism, and dedication throughout his high school career. His performance at the international level reflects his ability to apply classroom knowledge to real-world business scenarios while representing Northside High School and Roanoke County Public Schools with excellence on the international stage.



Teacher Feature

Meet Shawn Burns! Burton Manufacturing Teacher!

After serving 25 years in the United States Navy, Shawn Burns transitioned into education, bringing decades of technical expertise to students in both higher education and K-12 classrooms. Since joining Burton Center for Arts and Technology in 2015 as an Advanced Manufacturing instructor, he has earned numerous honors, including the 2016 RBTC STEM-H Education Award, the 2020 Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Award for Teaching Excellence, and the 2026 Scott Van Cleef AFA Chapter Teacher of the Year Award. Beyond the awards, Burns says the most rewarding part of teaching has been helping students discover career paths and seeing former students return to thank him for the impact he made on their lives. Congratulations to Mr. Burns on his retirement.



"The old saying goes, measure twice and cut once and I add that it applies to more than just cutting a piece of material"

—Shawn Burns

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As the 2025-26 school year draws to a close, there is much to be celebrated! This month's newsletter focuses on a wide range of activities and positive news from the CTE department. A major annual focus, the development of the RCPS Perkins Plan, was finalized at the end of April. I was able to participate in the following: the State of CTE event at Hotel Roanoke, a Virginia Partnership for Health Science Careers convening in Richmond and a presentation at the Virginia Workforce Symposium alongside our partners in the Office of Economic Development, Branch and the Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board. I had the honor of leading the Burton School Strategic Plan review and I was able to drop by Altec's Weld-Off event where three RCPS welding students were competing. The CTE Department continues to offer tours of RCCTC for the Campaign for Excellence, participate in Region VI CTE Administrators meetings, Carnegie Future of High School work and collaboration to offer Industry Insight Tours. We will try to catch our breath this summer while planning for the new year so our CTE teaching staff is ready to hit the ground running in August!

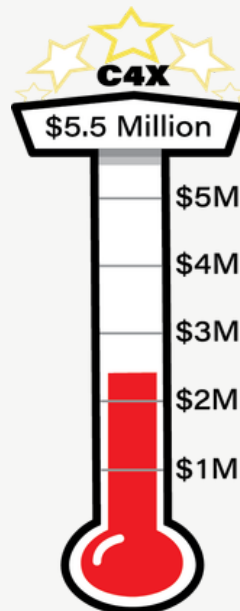
Until then...Happy Summer!

Jason Suhr

Jason Suhr

CAMPAIGN FOR EXCELLENCE

Our Campaign for Excellence is off to a great start! To date, we've received commitments of an incredible \$2.36 million, a testament to the generosity and commitment of our outstanding business partners and supporters (pictured below: Carilion Clinic, Bower Heating and Air, Simpson Funeral Home, and Alro Steel). These investments are helping create meaningful opportunities for students and strengthening workforce development efforts across our community. We are grateful for the continued collaboration and support from the businesses and organizations that make this work possible. As momentum continues to build, we look forward to sharing even more exciting announcements and partnerships in the months ahead. Stay tuned!



Campaign for Excellence



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

Celebrating Success Across RCPS

As the school year comes to a close, April and May have been filled with exciting events, accomplishments, and celebrations across our schools and programs. From student achievements and hands-on learning experiences to community partnerships and special recognitions, there has been so much to celebrate. Here are just a few of the many amazing highlights from the past two months.

Congratulations to Jason Suhr and Dr. Ken Nicely for recognition by the Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council for their impact on education in the region. Dr. Nicely received the 2026 Ruby Award for outstanding leadership, and Jason Suhr was named K-12 STEM-H Educator of the Year for excellence in advancing innovative math, science, and technology education.



At Burton Center for Arts & Technology, cosmetology students hosted members of the public for the kickoff of Infinite Possibilities Salon, a school-based enterprise. The salon allows students to apply classroom learning in a real-world setting by providing client services under instructor supervision, building both technical and professional skills.

We were excited to welcome the Roanoke Regional Chamber's Leadership Roanoke Valley group to Burton Center for Arts and Technology on April 15. Visitors had the opportunity to tour the school, meet students and instructors, and see firsthand the incredible learning experiences taking place each day. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the innovative programs, hands-on training, and outstanding work happening at Burton.



Hidden Valley Middle went to their very first robotics competition on Thursday April 16 in Danville. There was a big field of 30 different middle school teams, where they had to collaborate in 10 different matches. It was a great environment and the team placed 10th.

On April 1, Roanoke County Public Schools, in partnership with the Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board, hosted a districtwide career fair for students, including graduating seniors, from across the division. The event focused on connecting students with local employers and highlighting immediate employment opportunities for those preparing to enter the workforce after graduation.



On April 30, Northside High School student Jayden Campbell joined Superintendent Dr. Ken Nicely, CTE Director Jason Suhr, and CTE Supervisor Mark Jones at the State of CTE Conference held at the Hotel Roanoke. Jayden and Mark Jones also had the opportunity to serve as panel speakers, sharing perspectives on Career and Technical Education and highlighting the strong programs and student experiences across the division.



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