

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION



THE OPPORTUNITY ENGINE

Welcome Back

Welcome back to the Opportunity Engine newsletter! As we begin the 2026–27 school year, there is tremendous energy surrounding Career and Technical Education, and I am excited about the opportunities ahead for our students, staff, and community partners.

Another area of significant growth is our **Registered Apprenticeship** program. We are excited to begin the year with an increased number of student apprentices year-over-year as well as a growing number of sponsor companies. These partnerships provide students with an invaluable opportunity to earn, learn, develop professional skills, and begin building meaningful career pathways while still in high school.

Momentum also continues to build around our **Campaign for Excellence**. Through the generosity and involvement of our business and community partners, the campaign is helping us ensure our programs reflect the technology, equipment, and expectations students will encounter in today's workplace. (See pics on page 2)

We recently welcomed **Governor Spanberger** to the Roanoke County Career and Technology Center (RCCTC). The visit showcased our new facility and how RCPS is committed to preparing students for high-demand careers throughout our region and the Commonwealth.

Our commitment to connecting education and industry also continues through **Industry Insight Tours**. A recent tour at PFG provided educators with a firsthand look at career opportunities, workplace expectations, and the skills needed in today's workforce. Experiences like these strengthen the connection between our classrooms, the regional economy and what it means to be Opportunity Ready.

There is much to celebrate as we begin this school year. Thank you to our teachers, students, families, business partners, and community members who continue to make CTE an important part of the RCPS experience.

Looking forward to an outstanding year of opportunities!

Jason Suhr



⚙️ IN THE WORKS ⚙️

Manufacturing Day 2026

Throughout the week of September 28, high school students will visit six local manufacturing facilities to explore careers and learn more about the opportunities available in our community. Learn more at mfgday.com.

7th Grade Career Quest 2026

In October, The Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board will host 7th grade students at Career Quest to explore career pathways and connect with local businesses. Learn more at careerquestva.com.

8th Grade Burton Tours

During the week of October 12, 8th grade students will visit Burton Center for Arts & Technology to tour the school, explore programs, and discover opportunities they may want to pursue in high school. [Click here to see Burton's programs!](#)

Teacher Feature

Meet Kim McKee, NHS Marketing Teacher!

For more than three decades, Kim has been a valued member of Roanoke County Public Schools, with her RCPS journey beginning as a student at William Byrd High School. Her experiences in Marketing, DECA, and work-based learning inspired her to pursue a career in Marketing education. After graduating from Virginia Tech, she returned to Roanoke in 2003 when a Marketing position opened at Northside High School—in the very classroom where she had completed her student teaching years earlier. Kim has been at Northside ever since, helping grow the Marketing and DECA programs and building lasting relationships with students, families, colleagues, and the community. One of the most rewarding parts of her career has been watching students grow in confidence and discover what they are capable of. Today, she has the unique opportunity to teach the children of former students, a reflection of the lasting impact she has made on generations of learners. For Kim, Northside is more than a place to teach—it truly feels like home.



"I truly love what I teach and what I do, but what makes this career so rewarding is the students. There is a saying, 'Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life,' and I feel incredibly fortunate that I get to spend each day helping students discover their strengths, build confidence, and believe in themselves."

Work-Based Learning News

Putting Learning to **Work!**

Work-Based Learning continues to grow across Roanoke County Public Schools, providing students with meaningful opportunities to connect what they learn in the classroom to real-world careers. Through partnerships with local businesses and organizations, students are gaining hands-on experience, building professional skills, and exploring career pathways while still in high school.

In August, RCPS hosted its first Registered Apprenticeship Orientation, giving participating students an opportunity to ask questions, learn about program expectations, and connect with the support available to them throughout their apprenticeship.

Number of RCPS students currently participating in High-Quality Work-Based Learning Experiences:

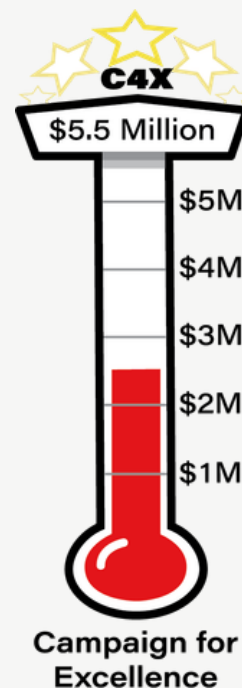
Registered Apprenticeships – 34
Internships – 45
School-Based Enterprises – 270
Cooperative Education – 329

CAMPAIGN FOR EXCELLENCE

The Campaign for Excellence continues to gain momentum as local businesses invest in the future of Roanoke County Public Schools students. Most recently, Altec committed \$350,000 and Varney committed \$250,000, bringing an additional \$600,000 of support to the campaign. With these contributions, the campaign has edged just over \$2.5 million raised, with additional companies continuing to join this effort. This strong support from business and industry will help provide students with expanded opportunities, industry-aligned equipment and instruction, and pathways that prepare them for success in high-demand careers.



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



CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK: [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ROCOCTE](https://www.facebook.com/ROCOCTE)