

“PlugGED In” Kicks Off In Lebanon

On February 17, 2009, Senator Jim Webb and Virginia Secretary of Technology Aneesh Chopra visited Lebanon to announce the kickoff of an initiative to prepare high school dropouts for entry-level technology jobs while they study for the GED® tests.



Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright announces that \$15,000 has been awarded by the Alcoa Foundation to provide college scholarships for the PlugGED In students.

Literacy Institute at VCU, VDOE, the University of Kentucky, and Vanderbilt University.

“When we got everyone to the table, we saw a real opportunity to align adult education with the needs of major employers,” Dr. Emblidge said. “Everybody wins- the student, the employers, and the community.”

Census data show that a high percentage of working-age adults in Southwest Virginia lack a high school-level credential. After the outlines of the PlugGED In program were developed, Northrop Grumman and CGI Inc., both of which established facilities in Russell County in recent years, signaled their eagerness to participate in a pilot.

“Northrop Grumman needs qualified IT professionals at our facility in Lebanon,” said Jim Tiscornia, Program Manager with Northrop Grumman. “The PlugGED In program will play an important role in helping us fill these needs.”

Students will receive guidance from volunteer mentors from both Northrop Grumman and CGI Inc., as well as career coaching from the community college.

PlugGED In classes will meet three nights a week at the University of Virginia at Wise’s Southwest Virginia Technology Development Center in Lebanon. Classes will be co-taught by instructors from Southwest Regional Adult Education and Southwest Virginia Community College. As part of the curriculum, students will have the opportunity to prepare for any one of several Microsoft certifications free of charge through partnerships with the Microsoft Academy and Southwest Virginia Community College.

“This partnership aligns perfectly with Microsoft’s mission to enable people and businesses throughout the world to realize their full potential,” said Linda Zecher, Microsoft’s corporate vice-president for Worldwide Public Sector. “We’re thrilled to be involved with this initiative because it confronts a serious problem with an innovative solution that will pay dividends to the community’s citizens and businesses.”

“Virginia has pioneered programs that meet adults where they are and help them earn a GED certificate quickly,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright. “Now we’re looking at ways to combine GED preparation with industry certification and training in the hard and soft skills young adults must have to succeed in the workforce.”

The Virginia Department of Education’s recent efforts toward expanded testing access and curriculum development have resulted in substantial increases in testing and credentialing. In 2002, 14,982 people took the GED tests in Virginia, and 11,830 GED credentials were awarded. In 2008, 24,492 people took the tests, and the commonwealth awarded 16,479 certificates. Using Virginia’s innovative Fast Track GED curriculum, many people are able to complete the program in just three to six months.

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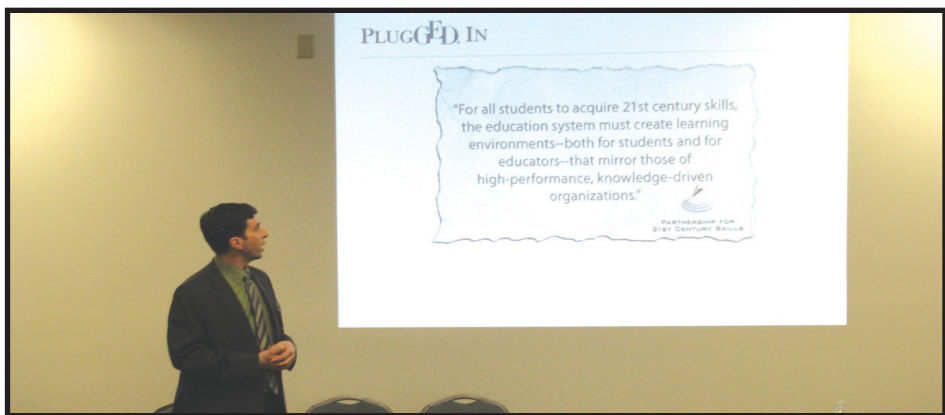
Virginia Secretary of Technology Aneesh Chopra addresses audience



PlugGED In students attend kickoff event



Senator Webb and Kenneth McGlothlin



Dr. Richard Sebastin

PLUGGED IN

There are 17 participants enrolled in the PlugGED In program. Classes began on February 3, 2009 and will meet three nights a week through July. Over the duration of the 6-month program, students will also meet regularly with career coaches and mentors from local industries, participate in mock interviews, experience online learning, and earn community college credits for future post-secondary education and training.

“For all students to acquire 21st century skills, the education system must create learning environments-both for students and for educators-that mirror those of high-performance, knowledge-driven organizations.”
-Partnership for 21st Century Skills

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	Class Location	Days	Time
Castlewood	CHS Old Agriculture Building	Tu & Th	5:00pm-8:00pm
Castlewood	Copper Creek Elementary	M-Th	8:30am-2:30pm
Dante	Dante Fire Department	M	4:00pm-8:00pm
Honaker	Honaker Elementary	Tu & Th	9:00am-12:00pm
Honaker	Honaker High School Cottage	Tu & Th	5:30pm-8:30pm
Lebanon	Russell Co. Career & Tech. Center	M,W,F	9:00am-11:30am
Lebanon	Russell Co. Career & Tech. Center	Tu & Th	5:00pm-8:00pm
Lebanon	Cedar Center	Tu-Th Fridays	9:00am-3:00pm 9:00am-12:00pm
Swords Creek	Givens Elementary	M & W	9:30am-12:30pm

2008 Regional GED Testing Report

The following data was collected from January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008. The number of people tested includes those who did partial testing and those who took the complete battery of tests. Partial testing consists of taking one or more of the GED subject tests without completing all five. Those who passed consist of all who passed the complete battery of five tests.

Testing Center	# Tested	# Took complete battery	# Passed complete battery	# Incomplete testers	Pass Rate
Buchanan	102	81	67	21	82.72%
Dickenson	92	62	51	30	82.26%
Russell	151	108	96	43	88.89%
Tazewell	219	171	145	48	84.80%
Region totals	564	422	359	142	85.07%