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Letter to the Editor of Time Magazine

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Letter to the Editor of *Time Magazine*

This letter to the editor was printed in March 2014.

Dear Ms. Foroohar,

I applaud the innovation that you recently wrote about in your article, “The Diploma That Works” in the February 24, 2014 edition of TIME. Better ways to align high school, post-secondary education and career opportunities, like those occurring at Sarah B. Goode High School in Chicago, are the priority today. Leaders from Virginia’s 23 community colleges are seeking, and offering, new ways for students to connect with affordable postsecondary opportunities that lead to careers in high-demand, good-paying fields – opportunities that begin while those students are still in high school.

This is succeeding in Virginia. For a decade now, our students have been earning community college credit while still in high school. We served nearly 32,000 high school students last year in our Dual Enrollment effort. Virginia’s most rural, economically- and educationally-deprived areas boast our largest programs. In fact, nearly a quarter of Dual Enrollment students were from minority racial/ethnic groups and just under half of these students were age 16 or younger.

Our results are impressive.

Nearly 700 Dual Enrollment students earned awards (associates degrees and certificates) from Virginia’s Community Colleges last year. More than 400 received associates degrees in general studies and other transfer-related fields. Another 200 students earned certifications in nursing, emergency medical technology and other allied health fields. Southside Virginia, Central Virginia, Rappahannock and Patrick Henry had the programs with the largest numbers of graduates.



The future is bright for this work. A new law, passed in 2012, requires every Virginia public school system to work with their community college so that every one of their students have a way to earn college credit, and even a credential, prior to high school graduation. This collaboration is inspiring robust discussions about teacher preparation, college readiness and career readiness. Improving this alignment on a continual basis is essential to connecting individuals, knowledge and skills, and employers to foster strong local economies.

Sincerely,
Glenn DuBois, chancellor
Virginia’s Community Colleges