



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor

Mark R. Warner
Governor

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**VIRGINIA CAREER EDUCATION FOUNDATION
BRINGS ON PRESIDENT**

~New public-private partnership to promote career and technical education across Virginia~

RICHMOND -- Governor Mark R. Warner today announced the recent appointment of Brenda S. Frierson as President of the Virginia Career Education Foundation by the Foundation's Board of Directors. The Foundation, launched by Governor Warner in September, 2002 is a not-for-profit foundation to seek innovative ways to promote career and technical education. The Foundation's primary mission is to raise funds and lend support for initiatives, including public-private partnerships, which promote career awareness and quality career and technical programs, particularly for middle and high school students.

"Brenda Frierson's appointment allows us to move forward on an initiative I pledged during the campaign – one that demonstrates that Virginians value plumbers and electricians as much as we do doctors and lawyers," Governor Warner said. "Government alone cannot reinvigorate the training programs and employer involvement necessary to give students the tools to succeed in both high-tech Information Age careers or traditional technical careers. This new foundation is a great step forward."

The Foundation itself is a public-private partnership. It received some seed money from the 2002 General Assembly and receives strong support from the Warner Administration. Additional funds are leveraged through grants the Foundation awards. All VCEF funded projects must evidence broad community commitment through matching funds and in-kind services. Successful projects often combine the resources of governmental educational agencies at the state and local level with the business sector.

The Foundation will work to stimulate greater input from industry, increase the collaboration between business and industry and the education communities, and promote and expand the most successful programs throughout the Commonwealth.

In 2000-2001, there were 559,172 middle and high school students enrolled in career and technical education, compared to 505,034 in 1992-1993. The 10% increase in enrollment over eight years is not sufficient to keep pace with current or future workforce demands.

The Virginia Career Education Foundation will play an important role in closing the gap between the skills required in today's workplace and the capability of the Commonwealth's workforce.

"I am honored to be the first person selected to lead such an important statewide initiative," said Frierson. "Students, educators, and business and community leaders across the Commonwealth are destined to succeed on much higher levels. Now, more than ever, it is critical that we do everything possible to prepare every Virginian and every community for economic prosperity."

Ms. Frierson holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration, with an emphasis in Organizational Communication from The Ohio State University and a Bachelor's of Arts Degree (magna cum laude) in History and Political Science from Virginia Union University.

Most recently, she served as Director of Business and Career Development at Renaissance Resources LLC. For nine years prior to that she served as Managing Director of INROADS/Virginia, Inc., an affiliate international career development not-for-profit organization. Prior, she worked in human resources development with the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Transportation.

Additionally, she serves on the Management Advisory Committee of Virginia Union University's School of Business, the North Richmond YMCA Board of Directors, Second Chance Employment Services Board of Directors, Partnership for the Future Advisory Board, Leadership Round Table Development Program Steering Committee, and is a member of the Rotary Club of Richmond.

"Virginia students and employers are fortunate to have someone of Ms. Frierson's caliber and background to work with the Foundation," said Anna Lawson, chair of the Foundation's Board of Directors. "She brings energy and passion to furthering the Foundation's goals. We are confident her knowledge, experience, enthusiasm and result-oriented leadership are precisely what we need to help ensure we achieve our mission."

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