



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of the Governor

Executive Order

NUMBER THIRTY-SIX (2019)

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE VIRGINIA STEM EDUCATION COMMISSION

Importance of STEM Education and Employment

Virginia has a distinguished record as one of the best states for education, employment, and growth in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). This is the result of our strong education pipeline and business friendly climate, which have fostered an economy that employs hundreds of thousands of Virginians in STEM fields. Additionally, Virginia is expected to add nearly 150,000 new STEM jobs in the next five years, with opportunities expected to grow for years to come. Employers know that they need employees with varying levels of STEM expertise; but the STEM education pipeline has not evolved as quickly as economic demand. Educational inequities too often limit access to advanced courses in STEM disciplines, credentials, and work-based learning for many of our most vulnerable and underrepresented students.

In order to close those achievement opportunity gaps, meet the growing economic demands for STEM-prepared employees, and maintain its recognition as one of the best states for STEM education and employment, the Commonwealth must be strategic about how it prepares young people and adapts to the rapidly evolving needs of employers. To accomplish this, Virginia must begin by creating a unified vision and adopting a set of dynamic shared goals to strategically inform how we prepare students for STEM jobs of the future.

Establishment of the Commission

Accordingly, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor under Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and §§ 2.2-134 and 2.2-135 of the *Code of Virginia*, and subject to my continuing and ultimate authority and responsibility to act in such matters, I hereby establish the Virginia STEM Education Commission (Commission).

Duties of the Commission

The Commission will assist in aligning efforts around the state, measuring our programming and workforce landscape, identifying areas that can be better supported, and seeking methods in which we can more effectively prepare Virginians for employment. These goals will support the modernization of our education systems and local economies by preparing a capable and ready workforce to lead Virginia into a STEM-focused future.

The Virginia STEM Education Commission shall work to develop a State STEM Plan to include a set of definitions, goals, strategies, and measurable impacts and outcomes related to the following key areas:

1. Inspire and empower our students to develop the knowledge, skills, and mindsets necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing, technologically-advanced, global society.
2. Ensure equitable opportunities and access for every Virginian to become a vital part of a robust STEM ecosystem.
3. Continuously improve the awareness, effectiveness, support, and quality of partnerships among educational entities, employers, and nonprofits.
4. Create sustainable and supportive conditions to align Virginia's educational, economic, and community goals.

The Commission shall encourage state agencies to collaborate among government and non-governmental entities on collective goals and support efforts to share data to track outcome metrics, redesign future curriculum and course design, and inform state and local policy. In addition, it shall evaluate and recommend ways to optimize and align public-private partnerships and local, state, and federal resources to enhance current and prospective programs and services for Virginia's children and their families, particularly those at higher risk. It shall also identify best practices and areas for improvement.

The State STEM Plan will require collaboration from a wide range of state and local stakeholders, with early childhood, K-12, post-secondary, out-of-school programs, informal education, workforce development, environmental education, and business and industry partners from every region of the state.

Composition of and Support of the Commission

The First Lady of Virginia will chair the Commission. The remaining members of the Commission will be appointed by the Governor and will include experts from education, industry, and workforce perspectives from around the Commonwealth.

Staff support for the Commission will be provided by the Office of the Secretary of Education, the Virginia Department of Education, and the Science Museum of Virginia. An

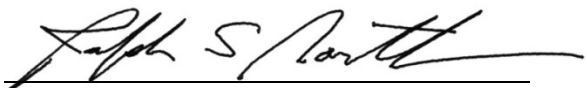
estimated 150 hours of staff time will be required to support the work of the Commission. The Commission will serve in an advisory role, in accordance with § 2.2-2100 of the *Code of Virginia*. Members will serve without compensation. The Commission will meet upon the call of the chair at least quarterly. The Commission will issue a written report no later than July 1, 2020, and any additional reports and recommendations as necessary or requested by the Governor.

Effective Date of the Executive Order

This Executive Order shall be effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect for a year from its signing, unless amended or rescinded by further executive order.

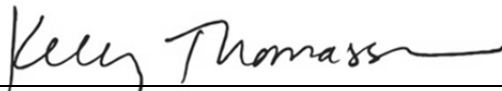
Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 17th day of July 2019.





Ralph S. Northam, Governor

Attest:



Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth