**2023 SIX-YEAR PLAN NARRATIVE (Part II)**

**INSTITUTION:**  Virginia Community College System

**OVERVIEW**

The six-year plan should describe the institution’s goals as they relate to the Commonwealth’s goals as articulated in the *Pathways to Opportunity: The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*; the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011 (TJ21); the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act of 2005; and the Governor’s objectives to prepare every graduate for success in life. Please use this opportunity to outline your institution’s plans and objectives, especially as they relate to the Commonwealth’s goals.

The instructions within the institutional mission and priorities section below ask for specific strategies related to affordability and access to quality postsecondary education that prepare students for success in life. Other sections offer institutions the opportunity to describe additional strategies to advance institutional goals and Commonwealth needs.

***Please be comprehensive but as concise as possible with responses; you are encouraged to use bullet points vs. prose. Consider this a starting point for the dialogue with OpSix; you will have the opportunity to further elaborate on the narrative in your review sessions later this summer.***

***Please save this narrative document with your institution’s name added to the file name.***

**SECTION A: MISSION & PRIORITIES**

***Key question: What are your institution’s unique strengths and how do those inform your strategic priorities?***

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| **A1. What is your institutional mission? Please share any plans you have to change your mission over the six-year period.** |
| VCCS Mission*We give everyone the opportunity to learn and develop the right skills so lives and communities are strengthened.*VCCS does not have plans to change its mission over the next six years. However, given the changes in the demands on higher education, and the shifting of the market for postsecondary skills and credentials that lead to well paying jobs in high demand sectors, VCCS does anticipate significant transformation in how we pursue and achieve our mission. This document outlines the primary elements that will lead to the transformation of how Virginia’s Community Colleges fulfill the workforce and higher education needs of the Commonwealth and includes the high level strategies and accompanying tactics that we must pursue if we are going to remain responsive and relevant and truly give “everyone the opportunity to learn and develop the right skills.” VCCS is fully committed to Governor Youngkin’s goal of every high school student graduating not only with a high school diploma, but also a meaningful postsecondary credential. We believe that our colleges are the most effective and efficient providers of instruction and credentialing to make that vision a reality. But to serve in that capacity will require transformational changes. The transformation herein is aligned to a handful of guiding principles that inform the changes being proposed: * Disrupting the status quo
* Blurring the lines between secondary and postsecondary education, between academic and workforce development programming, and between colleges and the workplace
* Providing access to meaningful postsecondary credentials for all Virginians
* Paying for performance
* Shifting the goal line from completion to a good job in a high demand sector.

Our operational values support the Governor’s bold agenda for the Virginia Community Colleges to make a transformational impact on Virginia by being a key partner in helping to fill 300,000 jobs by ensuring that our programs are aligned with the needs of business and accessible to the 3 million working-age adults in Virginia who lack a meaningful postsecondary credential, AND assuring all high school students graduate with either a college-level associate degree or industry-recognized credentials that have value among employers.  |
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| **A2. What are your institution’s greatest strengths and areas of distinctiveness that it should continue to invest in? What are your institution’s greatest opportunities for improvement?** |
| **STRENGTHS**Virginia’s Community Colleges are distinctly poised to achieve the outcomes proposed in this document. We are the only provider of postsecondary education and meaningful postsecondary credentials that has true statewide scope, with 23 colleges representing 40 campuses across the Commonwealth. We will rely on that reach and capitalize on our key strengths.Recently, and under the leadership of the new chancellor, the 23 colleges are aligning themselves according to the 9 GO Virginia regions and have submitted plans to the chancellor outlining programming that needs to be scaled to efficiently respond to the regional job demands in their respective regions. To accomplish this, colleges were provided extensive labor market information from the Virginia Office of Education Economics that summarized labor market demand, by industry, in the coming 10 years. Guided by these data, the colleges in each region developed priorities that inform the plans being submitted here. The colleges and the system office recognize that to maximize efficiency, maintain or reduce costs, and produce skilled workers for the jobs that are now and will be available, they *must* work together in a regional, sector-focused manner. Several of our system’s and colleges’ strengths will be capitalized toward these ends. Among these are: * Comprehensive footprint in the Commonwealth; 23 colleges with 40 campuses and many satellite sites
* Accreditation standards and alignment to industry credentials that ensure regular review and updates to curricula so that relevance and rigor are maintained
* Significant support among employers, associations, and General Assembly members for FastForward programming that accelerates the path toward well-paying jobs through a pay-for-performance model
* Ability to develop customized training for businesses and to deliver training onsite where workers are
* Flexibility of workforce training to quickly meet emerging business demands
* Key partnerships with other workforce focused agencies, including VEDP/VOEE, VDSS, VDOE, DARS, DOLI, that help inform our planning, spread our influence, and expand our offerings
* A Shared Services Center that negotiates contracts and pricing on behalf of all 23 colleges to ensure best possible pricing for goods and services provided by vendors
* Recent policy changes that allow for adults to receive up to 75% of credits toward a degree or certificate to be earned by credit for prior learning, and for high school seniors to access FastForward programs that propel them into the workforce upon graduation
* Ability to share faculty in highly technical fields so that colleges are not competing for hard to find faculty members
* Locally rooted in and trusted by communities and employers
* Highly successful education and training programs that lead to employment in students’ communities – at least 80% of community college completers work in Virginia
* Focus on access to and success in the local economy
* Successful trends in student outcomes over the past several years as funding per student has increased and as a portion of funds have been allocated through an outcomes-based model:
	+ **Increased graduation rate** -- 21.8% to 33.8% (above national average of 31.8% according to IPEDS).
	+ **Increased transfers** by 20% and transfers completing 16 or more credit hours by 23% based on VCCS performance funding metrics.
	+ **Decreased student borrowing** from $194 million annually in 2011-12 to $55million annually in 2021-22. (Also borrowing per FTE dropped from $1,572 per FTE to $643 per FTE and individual students borrowing from 29,785 to 9,108).
	+ **Reduced time to degree** for full-time college transfer associates students from median 3 years to 2.5 years and for career technical associates students from 4 to 3.5 years;
		- for part-time college transfer associates students from median 4 years to 2.5 years and career technical associates students from 6.5 to 5 years.
	+ **Greater percentage of marginalized students completed** on-time within 3 years from 11% to 23%.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT*** Greater collaboration and coordination among colleges to serve the regional needs of industry (e.g., shared services distance learning across colleges)
* Ability to pay salaries that will attract and retain skilled faculty in highly technical areas of instruction (e.g., IT, nursing, advanced manufacturing)
* Maximizing consistent and meaningful employer and industry ownership of outcomes through industry-specific curriculum and skill development, mentorship, experiential learning including refining and defining mutually shared outcomes for digital, soft, meta and technical skills
* More effective use of targeted and integrated technology solutions to streamline the path from recruitment to enrollment to completion to job placement
* More comprehensive career placement (not just career planning) services in every region
* More comprehensive outreach to high school students and guidance staff about community college paths to success
* Ensure economic opportunity for all students by determining the average system-wide cost of educational delivery for selected high-demand, high-cost programs—understanding any local cost variances–with an eye towards expanding access for historically minoritized populations
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| **A3. What are the top 3-5 strategic priorities you are currently pursuing or planning to pursue in the next six years? Please explain how each strategy relates to the strengths and/or opportunities for improvement mentioned above and will ultimately drive better outcomes for students.** |
| **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: INCREASE CAPACITY REGIONALLY**In the coming 6 years, the VCCS will transform to a regionally driven organization aligned to the GO Virginia economic development regions and develop and/or scale quality programs in high demand sectors that lead to meaningful credentials and good jobs. Achieving this transformation will require disrupting how we operate and what we prioritize with our resources. It will also force a focus on two key groups of students that will drive the economic vitality of the Commonwealth in the coming decade – (1) **adult students looking to upskill or reskill to advance their careers**, and (2) **high school students who must earn high quality**, **postsecondary credentials to prepare for careers and/or transfer to bachelor’s degree programs and beyond**. Broad areas of change are outlined below. **Build State-of-the-Art Career and Technical Programs and Labs*** G3 Innovation funds were distributed regionally toward this end, but will only provide for a small portion of the facilities and equipment to develop truly best-in-class training facilities in areas such as advanced manufacturing, nursing, IT and cybersecurity, and “smart” skilled trades
* Use VOEE and other data of high demand jobs in each region to target funding toward the most important industries in each region
* Secure or renovate existing facilities according to most up to date industry standards, and update as industry practices and processes evolve and needs change
* Focus on expansion of programming that works, but that need to be scaled regionally to increase volume of outcomes
* Examine VCCS and DHRM human resources policies and find ways to recruit, incentivize, and retain faculty in highly technical/high demand programs
* Fund capacity building efforts intended to help address this need through ongoing resources allocated to faculty; we seek to align those resources such that we are paying wage premiums where needed to secure the best faculty talent

**Fundamentally Alter Who We Recruit and How**There are approximately 90,000 high school graduates annually, and of those around 22% now enroll in community colleges each year. Yet, there are 3 million adults in Virginia who do not hold a meaningful postsecondary credential. We know from work done by the United Way that in any given county or city in Virginia, 30-50% of families do not make enough money to pay for the basic costs of living. Now called ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) (<https://www.unitedforalice.org/virginia>), this substantial portion of Virginia’s population represents approximately 89% of VCCS students. Challenges facing ALICE Virginians include pandemic learning loss, rent and other bills in arrears, mental and physical health barriers as well as having no financial safety net. With programs like FastForward and G3, we have proven that educating and training adult, nontraditional students is one of our greatest strengths. While ensuring high school graduates continue to have a path toward an associates degree and beyond must remain a part of our mission, the number of graduates will be declining in the next decade and of continued interest to Virginia’s universities. We must reach out to those potential students who are not well-served by higher education and who can have the largest and quickest impact on the economic well-being of their families, their communities, and the strength of the Commonwealth’s businesses. To do this, we will narrow our primary focus to adults looking to change or advance their careers, and high school students who must have a meaningful postsecondary credential to be viable in the job market. Tactics to achieve this include: * Working with VOEE and contracted marketers, develop regionalized outreach and recruitment campaigns that change the image of community colleges and highlight the concrete outcomes achieved by our students (jobs, wages, quality of life, health insurance and other benefits, upward mobility, and lifelong learning)
* Promote credit for prior learning more aggressively to select groups who can advance more quickly toward credentials with value in the labor market, such as veterans, high school students, adults without high school or postsecondary credentials, justice involved CTE students, and people with disabilities (see partnerships in section A2 that will support these efforts)
* Greater outreach to parents and guidance counselors about all of the options at Virginia’s community colleges and all of the paths that lead to a successful career, not just bachelor’s degrees
* Ensuring that there are career coaches in every high school in Virginia who can help students make the right postsecondary choices and educate high school students, faculty, and advisors about all of the paths to success available at Virginia’s community colleges
* Focus on Virginians impacted by the criminal justice system. Virginia’s community colleges have been serving the justice-impacted population for some time now, with the first Prison Education Program (PEP) being launched by Southside Virginia Community College in 1985. A total of 11 colleges have offered postsecondary education opportunities for incarcerated students, ranging from stackable FastForward credential programs to AA&S general studies degrees.
* Working with the Department of Corrections, analyze credit for prior learning for DOC’s CTE programs

**Disrupt Service Delivery and Optimize Facility Usage**If we are going to effectively serve our two primary student populations, we must shift our service delivery to one that is student focused instead of institution focused. The places, times, and types of instruction must align to students’ lives and schedules. To achieve this outcome our colleges will deliver on-demand, anytime learning. * Expand FastForward programming with new investments from the Commonwealth to address the ongoing 15-20% annual growth of the program; double the total funding support from the commonwealth by the end of the 6 years
* Comprehensively adopt onboarding redesign so that students can enroll within days instead of weeks
* Change class scheduling to deliver more at times when working adults are available (nights and weekends) and identify sites that are most accessible to working adults and high school students in their communities; utilizing our labs, classrooms, and equipment to their fullest
* Leverage resources across all 23 colleges to scale accessibility to online learning for every Virginian through a shared services model.
* Highly customized learning through expanded hy-flex learning opportunities to be available to every student at any time while providing more flexible didactic learning opportunities
* Relying on policy changes and continued expansion of the use of the [Credits2Careers](https://www.credits2careers.org/) portal, significantly increase the amount of credit for prior learning awarded by all colleges to accelerate time to completion
* Assess facilities that may need to be renovated, remodeled, or retired
* Expand existing programs wherein instruction is provided on site at businesses and within mobile training labs that can be shared among colleges to take the training to where students are, rather than them always having to travel to where we are
* Continuously review programs for viability, efficiency, and alignment with the needs of Virginia’s economy; discontinuing programs as needed

**Focus not Just on Completion, but also on Job Placement**Most, if not all of our students are predominantly driven by one thing – the desire for a good job and a better life. However, our colleges have traditionally focused on instruction, advising, and resources to ensure students complete their programs and earn credentials. That must be maintained, but we have to provide more comprehensive and deliberate connections between colleges and businesses to ensure that every student has a clear idea as to what jobs are available to them when they complete, where the jobs are, and how to get one. Our colleges have never been equipped, nor funded, to provide that level of service. Now is the time to change that. * Support industry-aligned career placement services shared among colleges in each of the nine regions
* Our colleges/regions were prompted, and gave good consideration, to the importance of scaling workplace learning, learn and earn models, apprenticeships and internships. Such opportunities should be highly integrated with industry-aligned career placement services

**Blur the Lines Between Secondary and Postsecondary Education*** VCCS and VDOE will make a proposal to support concurrent enrollment of high school students on college campuses as they pursue meaningful high-demand credentials through both credit and noncredit education and training

**Blur the Lines Between Credit/Noncredit Workforce Education and Training*** Expand credit for prior (CPL) learning to accelerate time to completion through stackable credentials
* Promote awareness and access to credit for prior learning by expanding and promoting Credits2Careers portal
* Create intentional pathways for stacking workforce credentials into credit certificate and degree programs to shift workforce training from a vertical operation to a horizontal aspect of all of our programming

  **Blur the Lines Between Colleges and Businesses*** Expand educational and training services to businesses delivered both at the colleges and at the business sites or other sites convenient to workers
* Redesign industry advisory groups and create more meaningful interactions around curricula, faculty, and educational and employment outcomes
* Work with businesses to develop ongoing “career development learning plans” for their employees so that the colleges can partner with businesses to develop their talent over years

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: PROVIDE EVERY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WITH A MEANINGFUL POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL** The VCCS fully supports the Governor’s vision that every high school student should graduate high school with both a diploma and a meaningful postsecondary credential. While some high school students have achieved this outcome in recent years, access to postsecondary programming for high school students is not comprehensive, and there are some regulatory and statutory hurdles that must be addressed in order for this vision to be realized across every school division in the Commonwealth. We also understand that communicating clear outcomes to students and parents about the opportunities is essential. Parents of high school students have a high interest in these efforts.VCCS has discussed this extensively with the Secretary of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. We will partner with the Department of Education to propose legislation in the upcoming General Assembly that will seek to make changes to the *Code of Virginia* and the Acts of Appropriation necessary to remove those barriers and to define how all high school students will be able to graduate with meaningful credentials that lead to transfer to a bachelor’s degree program or the achievement of a high demand credential that leads to gainful employment. VCCS has career coaches in 180 of the 386 public high schools in Virginia. These coaches are college employees who work in the high schools helping students develop career plans, understand college and educational options, enroll in college, apply for financial aid, and provide other supports that help the middle majority students recognize that college is an option for them and how to successfully matriculate. However, the majority of high schools do not have coaches serving students in this manner. Providing all high schools with career coaches would have a major impact in achieving the goal of every high school student graduating with a meaningful postsecondary credential that is aligned to their career plans. **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: PAY FOR PERFORMANCE****Fund what Works**The Virginia Community College System can continue incrementally growing the number of Virginians with meaningful postsecondary credentials. To rapidly grow Virginia’s skilled workforce in a manner that is aligned to the needs of business will require a bold new approach, built on the evidence of past success. Quantifiable outcomes from (1) FastForward and (2) seven years of implementing a performance-based funding model for credit programs offer an evidence-supported blueprint for expanding outcomes-based funding to rapidly drive targeted and significant improvements in job placement, transfer to high-value 4-year degrees, and alignment to high-demand regional industry sectors.* **FastForward** - Through a pay-only-for-performance model, FastForward has demonstrated a wide-range of highly desirable outcomes for Virginia. $55 million invested since 2016 has produced $2.6 billion in wages earned in Virginia, 93% program completion and 35,000 credentials earned exclusively in high-demand fields and delivered in weeks and months rather than years, through short-term, industry-driven training. Data matching with the Virginia Employment Commission reflect that approximately 80% of FastForward completers are employed in Virginia.
* **Outcomes-Based Funding Model** - in 2015, VCCS created an outcomes-based funding model for credit programs, like degrees and college certificates. The model, which dedicates 20% of General Fund dollars (i.e. $83.3M in FY 2023) to drive and reward desirable outcomes like retention, completion, and successful transfer, has contributed to measurable improvements in outcomes.
* **Targeted increases in funding to drive results** - As enrollment has decreased at Virginia’s Community Colleges, state funding has increased and tuition has remained relatively flat. This combination has modestly raised the expenditure per FTE at VCCS and produced measurable improvements in student outcomes.
	+ Even with modest increases in per FTE funding, VCCS remains the least funded of all Virginia public institutions of higher education in per-FTE fund – $4,324 per FTE at VCCS compared to $7,641 per FTE, the average of all public higher education institutions in Virginia. \*\*Moreover, VCCS remains among the lowest funded community colleges nationally: the per FTE expenditure at VCCS is in just the 23rd percentile when compared to all other community colleges in the nation.\*\*
	+ VCCS serves Virginians with the highest needs: low income, high need for student support, mental health challenges, pandemic learning loss, and the educationally underserved. These Virginians are the most expensive to successfully serve.
	+ Modest increases in per FTE funding brought on by increases in General Funding and decreases in enrollment have, when combined with our outcomes-based funding model, driven measurable improvements (see Section A2 above):
		- Increased completion rate
		- Increased transfers
		- Decreased student debt
		- Reduced time to degree
		- Greater percentage of marginalized students earn credentials on-time

Building on what works - the results of FastForward, an existing outcomes-based funding model, and results generated with slight increases in per FTE funding - we propose to scale up performance-based funding. New funding would be exclusively delivered through pay-for-performance to rapidly drive targeted and significant improvements in job placement, transfer to high-value 4-year degrees, and alignment to high-demand regional industry sectors.\*SCHEV’s [*Virginia Cost and Funding Need Study Report*](https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2022/RD392/PDF), July 2022\*\*Virginia House Appropriations Committee [2023 Session Revenue and Budget Outlook](https://hac.virginia.gov/Committee/files/2022/11-14-22/II_a%20-%20Revenue%20and%20Budget%20Outlook%20FINAL.pdf), November 2022 s) |

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| **A4. What support can OpSix provide to help you achieve those strategies? Please include both budget and policy requests and reference Part I of your submission where appropriate.**  |
| * Support changing language in several sections of the *Code of Virginia* to reflect definitions of dual enrollment and concurrent enrollment for high school students
* Support the removal of CIPs from budget language for G3 and develop policies with VCCS and other appropriate organizations to define annually what programs may be funded through G3, to include pathways to high demand baccalaureate degree programs such as computer science and teacher education
* Support VDOE priority to scale dual enrollment and concurrent high school enrollment leading to associate degrees or meaningful credentials for high school junior and seniors
* Support funding request for regional college program startup/expansion for high cost programs that align with VOEE data and GO Virginia plans to fill high-demand jobs in the region
* Support funding to deploy marketing so that employers and potential students know all of the options and the outcomes of community college education
* Support industry-aligned career placement services shared among colleges in each of the nine regions
* Support an increase in funding for the Workforce Credential Grant/FastForward in light of continued growth of the program and expansion of access to high school students (seniors) (SCHEV has run multiple models, and all of them suggest we will run out of WCG/FF funding in FY 24, and those models do not take into account adding high school seniors to the mix).
* Expand innovative lab school partnerships between K12, community college, and business and industry.
* Review and make recommendations to Board of Nursing regulations and requirements for programs and clinicals
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**SECTION B: STRATEGIC DEEP DIVE – ENROLLMENT VOLUME & COMPOSITION**

***Key question: How is your institution managing enrollment in light of state and national trends, and what are the financial implications?***

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| **B1. What do you see as the primary drivers of recent enrollment trends for your institution? Please reference any specific academic programs that have had a significant (positive or negative) effect on enrollment, if relevant.** |
| Like many public community colleges across the nation, Virginia’s community colleges have declined in enrollment since 2011-12. Nationally, 4.5 million fewer students are enrolled in associates and certificate programs – or– a national decline in enrollment of 38% in a decade, according to IPEDS data, Virginia's public two-year colleges have lost 76,358 students or 26% since AY 2011-12. Additionally, private non-profit colleges lost 65% of their associates and lower seeking students and private for-profit colleges lost 53%. In total, this is a loss of 86,703 two-year degree seeking students in Virginia since AY 2011-12.Over the past decade, VCCS’s enrollment has been driven by four factors 1) decreases in working adult credit enrollment due to a strong economy with low unemployment; 2) increasing enrollment in short-term, workforce focused FastForward courses; 3) increased dual enrollment opportunities for high school students; and 4) decreases in recent high school graduates choosing two-year colleges for continued education.In AY 2011-12, VCCS colleges experienced record-breaking enrollment, particularly among working age adults (age 24-64). Working adult enrollment hit a high of 74,382, an increase of 21% in the space of four years beginning in AY 2008-09. This enrollment surge coincided with the Great Recession’s record unemployment rates, rising from 3.1% to 9.1% for 25–35-year-olds within the same timeframe. Working adult enrollment began declining in 2013-14 between 2% and 11% annually. The largest year-over-year decrease occurred during 2016-18, perhaps not coincidentally the year that 25–35-year-old unemployment rates recovered to pre-Great Recession levels. By AY 2022-23, annual working adult enrollment had decreased by 56% of the Great Recession enrollment high.Recognizing the need for adults to reskill and upskill quickly to participate in a strong labor market, the General Assembly created the pay-for-performance Workforce Credential Grant program (branded FastForward), to incentivize VCCS colleges to offer more short-term training aimed at preparing working adults for in-demand jobs in the Commonwealth. Beginning in 2016-17, annual enrollment in FastForward courses has increased by approximately 20% annually to a headcount of 11,770 students in AY 2023-23.Additionally, over the past decade, enrollment of high school students into dual enrollment courses began to increase. In AY 2011-12, just under 26,000 high school students were enrolled in an average of 5.5 credits annually. By AY2022-23, nearly 45,000 high school students were receiving an average of 5.7 credits towards college degrees every year. These increases were driven by new legislation, initiated by then Governor McDonnell, requiring local community colleges and high schools to collaborate in offering more opportunities to complete college degrees and certificates prior to high school graduation.Coinciding with dual enrollment growth was a steady decline in recent high school graduates choosing two-year colleges to continue their education. In AY 2011-12, just under 28,000 high school graduates (31%) indicated they planned to attend community colleges. In AY 2021-22, this number had dropped to just under 22,000 (23% of graduates). During this same time period, the number of high school graduates going directly into employment rose from less than 10,000 to more than 14,000. Additionally, the number of high school graduates with no plans after graduation increased by nearly 1,200 students.These enrollment trends tell us that adults, and many high school graduates, are choosing employment over higher education. Working adults are seeking short-term training or are attending part-time when enrolled. This plan seeks to serve more adults in ways that are compatible with their success and the success of the Commonwealth. This plan also seeks to equip more high school students with meaningful postsecondary credentials before or as they graduate from high school.At this point, VCCS’s credit enrollment is stable after more than a decade of decline while FastForward enrollment continues to quickly climb. With adequate assistance to modernize the VCCS, transform the student experience and build overall capacity, as outlined in this Six-Year plan, VCCS credit enrollment will increase by the plan’s completion. The entire VCCS will be held accountable and responsible for this growth. |

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| **B2. Please summarize your enrollment management strategy moving forward and the specific actions (if any) you are taking to implement that strategy.** |
| Over the past two years, as a component of the VCCS strategic plan, Opportunity 2027, college leadership focused on redesigning the onboarding process for new students. The VCCS process mapped the entire student experience to eliminate redundancies, identify gaps, and correct process flow. The Onboarding Redesign Taskforce used the map to make recommendations for offsetting specific policy and process barriers that lead to disparities. Subsequently, the Taskforce identified optimal processes and structures for onboarding VCCS students based on evidence-based best practices. These strategies included redefining the VCCS brand, redesigning college websites to focus on career pathways to regionally in-demand jobs, expanding advising capacity and providing consistent training for all advisors, and offering 24/7 intrusive enrollment strategies and analytics using AI and other technology solutions. The Onboarding Redesign recommendations were adopted in February 2022, and as of June 2023, all colleges have implemented the Redesign. Beginning in Fall 2022, new first-time-in-college student enrollment increased year-over-year for the first time in more than a decade.As described in Section A3 of this plan, VCCS will focus its enrollment management efforts over the next six years on (1) **adult students looking to upskill or reskill to advance their careers**, and (2) **high school students who must earn high quality**, **postsecondary credentials to prepare for careers and/or transfer to bachelor’s degree programs and beyond**. The following enrollment management strategies have been implemented successfully at one or more VCCS colleges and will be scaled across the System:**Fundamentally Alter Who We Recruit** * Recapture former VCCS students and four-year university non-completers into programs relevant for their futures and for building regional workforces
* Build on successful FastForward and G3 social media marketing campaigns to develop regionalized outreach and recruitment campaigns including mainstream media consumed by ALICE students (e.g., radio, television, billboards)
* Change the image of community colleges by highlighting the concrete outcomes achieved by our students (e.g., jobs, wages, quality of life, healthcare and other benefits, upward mobility, and lifelong learning)
* Extend recruitment to include parents and guidance counselors, focusing on all educational pathways that lead to a successful career, not just bachelor’s degrees
* Ensure career coaches are available in every high school in Virginia who can help students make the informed post-secondary choices that help build regional workforces
* Expand learning opportunities to Virginians impacted by the criminal justice system
* Use lead generation services and using focused, disaggregated conversion strategies
* Increase presence where prospective students are such as churches, jails, social service and employment agencies, high schools and armed forces transitional centers
* Offer multilingual services and recruitment materials for students and parents
* Concentrate on expanding college workforce programming that is delivered to incumbent workers over the course of their careers; not just as they upskill or reskill to embark on a career

**Disrupt Service Delivery and Optimize Facility Usage*** Accelerate time-to-degree by reducing seat time and credit requirements, through expanded credit for prior learning options
* Transform traditional semester long courses by unbundling courses into stacked modules, offering on demand/just in time options, scheduling when adults are available, and offering shorter course sessions.
* Identify sites that are most accessible to working adults and high school students within their communities
* Expand existing programs wherein instruction is provided on site at businesses and within mobile training labs that can be shared among colleges to take the training to where students are, rather than them always having to travel to where we are.
* Leverage resources across all 23 colleges to scale accessibility to online learning for every Virginian through a shared services model for anytime, anywhere learning.

**Focus not Just on Completion, but also on Job Placement*** Maximize available student financial aid to support all students with financial need including middle income and career switching lifelong learning students.
* Maintain and expand student wrap-around support services (e.g., SingleStop benefit review, TimelyMD online mental health counseling, EAB Navigate advising management, food pantries, affordable housing options)
* Expand industry-aligned career placement services to all regions.
* Offer paid employment opportunities, including internships and apprenticeships, embedded in degrees and certificates
* Offer preparation bridge programming for students with work experience and previous training for in-demand jobs
* Collaborate with employer advisory committees, community-based organizations and K-12 to link students with job opportunities and associated support resources (e.g., transportation, childcare, professional clothing
* Expand opportunities for anytime, anywhere education and training across the Commonwealth

**Blur the Lines** * Expand concurrent enrollment of high school students on college campuses as they pursue meaningful high-demand credentials through both credit and noncredit education and training.
* Continue to expand the [Credits2Careers](https://www.credits2careers.org/) CPL and [Transfer Virginia](https://www.transfervirginia.org/) portals and promote them more aggressively among select populations
* Continue to embed workforce credentials into credit certificate and degree programs to include workforce training across all program offerings
* Develop more targeted workforce programming for incumbent workers by partnering with businesses in specific industry sectors to develop career training/education pathways in the industry
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| **B3. How ambitious/realistic/conservative are the enrollment projections you most recently submitted to SCHEV? What are the greatest unknowns or risks that could lead enrollment to differ significantly from your projections? Please reference national and statewide enrollment trends/projections and cite any other data (e.g. regional trends, performance of prior enrollment strategies) that informed your projections.** |
| Enrollments for community colleges are sensitive to local labor markets and to trends in the economy. In times of economic boom, community college enrollments will [decline](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-013-9294-7) (Hillman and Orian, 2013). In times of economic hardship, community college enrollments will typically [grow](https://www.jstor.org/stable/146230) (Betts and McFarland, 1995). Since the economic recovery following the 2008 Great Recession, community colleges nationally have experienced significant [declines](https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/community-college-enrollment-beginning-to-grow-this-spring/) in enrollment as the labor market has remained strong and unemployment has remained low for working aged adults.In projecting the Virginia Community College System enrollment for the next six years, we began by forecasting enrollments at the individual colleges, based on trends over the past 20 years, looking at program-placed credit and dual enrollment students. While the most recent trend years have the greatest influence on the forecasts, we factored in the Great Recession (2008-2010) and the Pandemic (2020-2021) to better understand the potential impacts of those economic events on increases and declines in overall enrollment. Recent upturns in enrollment at many colleges have had a stabilizing influence on total system enrollment with modest increases in headcount in the most recent Fall and Spring semesters.The 2024-2030 projections submitted to SCHEV represent a realistic view of enrollment in the VCCS assuming that no conditions change drastically in the labor market and that VCCS makes no significant changes to the types of programs offered, the support provided to students or the audiences reached. The strategies presented in this plan are intended to transform the student population of the VCCS by increasing the number of high school students earning credentials and degrees prior to high school graduation and by increasing the number of working adults who choose to reskill and upskill in high demand/high wage programs.  |

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| **B4. Explain the implications of your enrollment strategy on your institution’s financials. Please consider impacts on both revenues (e.g., discounting, financial aid, net tuition revenue) and expenditures (e.g., costs to implement enrollment management strategies, costs of enrolling more students or students with different needs, cost-per-student impact of flat/decreased enrollment).** |
| Based only on the realistic, business-as-usual enrollment projections provided to SCHEV in May 2023, declining enrollment in full-time equivalent students and expansion of non-tuition producing students over the next biennium would negatively impact tuition revenue and likely necessitate substantial cuts in VCCS services and offerings. While FastForward continues to grow and while growth will be accelerated by the inclusion of high school students, it does not offset the losses in academic/credit bearing students. Absent additional general fund support, these declining resources could jeopardize VCCS’ role in training the workforce necessary for Virginia’s continued economic growth. However, within this six-year plan, VCCS is proposing a significant transformation of its role in the Commonwealth by providing lifelong, employer-driven, regionally-aligned, post-secondary educational opportunities to working adults and to high school students prior to graduation. This transformation will fundamentally alter who we are serving and how we are serving them, which, in turn, will change revenue and expenditures.The additional investments proposed in this plan will support enrollment strategies of the Opportunity 2027 strategic plan and this six-year plan, which have the potential to increase enrollment in in-demand fields, thus generating additional tuition revenue while VCCS seeks to hold the line on substantial tuition increases over the next biennium. |

**SECTION C: STRATEGIC DEEP DIVE – PROGRAM ALIGNMENT & PERFORMANCE**

**COMPLETION OUTCOMES**

***Key question: How is your institution supporting all students to succeed in completing their degree in a timely manner?***

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| **C1. What are your highest-priority completion outcomes targets, both overall and for particular student segments? Please include aspirational targets, realistic expectations, and qualitative targets and specify by when you are aiming to meet those targets (e.g., X% 6-year graduation rate for Pell students by 2030).** |
| The strategies outlined in Section A are poised to transform the Virginia Community College System, including who we serve and how we serve them. The cumulative result of the strategies outlined in Section A and the investments in C3 will be **35,662** **additional credentialers employed in high demand fields by 2030**. The following targets suggest leading and lagging indicators of the success of the proposed strategies:Transforming VCCS To Regionally Scale Programs In High Demand Sectors Through Meaningful Credentials Leading To Good JobsTargeted outcomes:* Increase enrollment in regionally aligned high demand fields by 9,000 students annually by 2030. *(Requires capacity building investment by 2030)*
* Increase graduates from programs that are aligned to occupations that are expected to see high growth in the next 5 years to 60% by 2030. *(Requires pay for performance investment to reach this outcome by 2030)*

Fundamentally Alter Who We Recruit and HowTargeted outcomes:* Increase application yield to 66% for Black, Hispanic, Indigenous, and low income people annually by 2027. *(Requires investment in expanding marketing efforts)*
* Increase percentage of program-placed students applying for financial aid to 75% annually by 2027. (R*equires investment in expanding high school career coaches*)
* Increase the number of working age adults enrolled annually by 14,000 by 2027. (stretch goal) *(Requires investment in expanding marketing efforts)*
* Increase the percentage of military affiliated students to 15% of credit headcount by 2027. *(Requires investment in expanding marketing efforts)*
* Increase participation among incarcerated students in FastForward and expand credit for prior learning for courses they have taken while incarcerated. The VCCS is currently collecting data from the colleges on program efforts, number of incarcerated students served, locations, funding, and expected future plans to expand or launch new programs. The current deadline for the survey is August 31, 2023.  *(Requires increased investment in FastForward)*

Disrupt Service Delivery and Optimize Facility UsageTargeted outcomes:* All FastForward programs will be articulated for credit toward degree completion by 2027
* All colleges will offer shortened sessions for courses included in the passport and uniform certificate of general education.
* All colleges will shift our service delivery to one that is student focused instead of institution focused, aligning places, times, and types of instruction to students’ lives and schedules. To achieve this outcome our colleges will deliver on-demand, anytime learning. *(Requires investment in pay for performance model and building out a centralized online, anytime, anywhere learning shared services model)*
* Increase average credit hour enrollment from 8 semester credit hours (SCH) annually to 12 SCH by 2027, thereby reducing time to credential/degree and better employment.
* Increase access to online learning by leveraging resources across all 23 colleges to scale accessibility to online, anytime, anywhere learning for every Virginian through a shared services model.*(Requires investment in building out a centralized online anytime, anywhere learning shared services model)*
* Increase online enrollment by 8,000 additional students annually by 2030. *(Requires investment in building out a centralized online, anytime, anywhere learning shared services model)*

Focus not Just on Completion, but also on Job PlacementTargeted Outcomes:* Increase the number of students enrolled in FastForward by 20% annually. *(Requires increased investment in FastForward to accommodate increased capacity by 2030)*
* Increase percentage of FastForward Completers to 95% by 2030. *(Requires increased investment in FastForward to accommodate increased capacity by 2030)*
* Increase percentage of FastForward credentialers in all programs to 75% by 2030. *(Requires increased investment in FastForward to accommodate increased capacity by 2030)*
* Increase graduation rates to 35% for first-time, full-time Black, Hispanic, Indigenous and Asian men by 2027. *(Requires pay for performance investment to reach this outcome by 2030)*
* Increase VCCS graduates employed in regionally high demand areas by 6,000 annually by 2030. *(Requires pay for performance investment, capacity building investment, and career placement investment to reach this outcome by 2030)*
* Increase graduates entering industries with the highest job growth in Virginia to 40% by 2030. *(Requires pay for performance investment, capacity building investment, and career placement investment to reach this outcome by 2030)*
* Increase the percentage of VCCS graduates who achieve upward mobility in Virginia to 50% by 2030. *(Requires pay for performance investment, capacity building investment, and career placement investment to reach this outcome by 2030)*

 Build State-of-the-Art Career and Technical Programs and LabsTargeted outcomes:* Launch 10 lab schools by 2027.
* Increase concurrently enrolled students earning FastForward credentials by 20% annually through 2027. *(Requires increased investment in FastForward to accommodate increased capacity by 2030)*
* Provide 12,500 concurrently enrolled students with meaningful postsecondary credentials prior to high school graduation by 2030. *(Requires investment in strategy 2 from A3 and amendments to Code of Virginia)*
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| **C2. What specific strategies/actions are you planning to take to achieve those goals? How will you draw on successes/challenges from your prior completion outcome improvement strategies?** |
| Approved by the State Board for Community Colleges, the VCCS strategic plan, [Opportunity 2027](https://go.boarddocs.com/va/vccs/Board.nsf/files/CTKUH47C1427/%24file/Opportunity%202027%20Biennium%20Report%20Narrative.pdf), was launched in July 2021. Emphasizing economic access and equity for all, necessary to meet Governor Youngkin’s bold agenda, the plan seeks to achieve equity in access, learning outcomes, and success for VCCS students from every race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic group. The plan’s five supporting goals target constituency communication,improved teaching and learning, expanded student support, expanding meaningful credentials and affordability and sustainability. Having recently completed the second year of implementation, all VCCS colleges have reported making changes in recruiting and onboarding new students, improving required course completions and increasing the annual credit hours earned, and improving the on-time completion of first-time/full-time students.The specific strategies identified in Section A3 of this six year plan build on successful college-level efforts to improve the access, learning outcomes and success of students by recruiting and retaining working age adults, fundamentally changing how students experience learning, blurring the lines between high school and postsecondary learning and focusing on meeting regional labor market needs. Specific enrollment management strategies for meeting these goals are identified in Section B4 of this plan. Opportunity 2027 First Biennium Report: [https://go.boarddocs.com/va/vccs/Board.nsf/files/CTKUH47C1427/$file/Opportunity%202027%20Biennium%20Report%20Narrative.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/va/vccs/Board.nsf/files/CTKUH47C1427/%24file/Opportunity%202027%20Biennium%20Report%20Narrative.pdf) |

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| **C3. How will you use existing/recently provided resources to execute those strategies? Will you be requesting incremental state resources? Please state the request and rationale and explicitly tie to Part I of your planning template.** |
| **Driving Strategic Outcomes**We will use existing resources and request new state resources to execute the three strategic priorities identified in section A3 and drive results as outlined in section C1 to meet Virginia’s most pressing workforce challenges. The additional state resources needed to drive the component parts of each strategy from section A3 and the associated results outlined in C1 are bulleted below: **Strategic priority 1: Increase capacity regionally*** **Build State-of-the-Art Career and Technical Programs and Labs -** $291M across the first biennium to increase capacity
* **Fundamentally Alter Who We Recruit and How -** $15M each year to drive marketing efforts that reach working adults and attract more businesses to use colleges’ workforce services, and $27M each year to provide coaches in every high school to help students obtain a meaningful postsecondary credential while in high school
* **Disrupt Service Delivery and Optimize Facility Usage -** $6.5M in the first year of the biennium and $8.5M in the second year of the biennium to expand FastForward to keep pace with growing demand for skilled and credentialed talent produced through short-term training; $5.3M each year of the biennium to expand access to online learning through a centralized shared services model to deliver on-demand, anytime, anywhere learning
* **Focus not Just on Completion, but also on Job Placement** - $10.7M annually to Support industry-aligned career placement services shared among colleges in each of the nine regions

**Strategic priority 2: Provide every high school student with a meaningful postsecondary credential*** While not part of our financial plan, we estimate that the cost of tuition and FastForward student costs of 12,500 students to be $35M annually

**Strategic priority 3: Pay for performance*** Targeted investments to drive results - $100M annually to build on what works: FastForward, an existing outcomes-based funding model, and improved outcomes generated with slight increases in per FTE funding. Specifically, with new resources, we will scale up outcomes-based funding. New funding will be delivered through pay-for-performance to rapidly drive targeted and significant improvements in job placement, transfer to high-value 4-year degrees, and alignment to high-demand regional industry sectors.
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**POST-COMPLETION OUTCOMES**

***Key question: How is your institution preparing all students for success beyond completion (e.g., career preparation)?***

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| **C4. Please explain how you monitor post-completion outcomes (e.g., employment rates, wage attainment, debt load, upward mobility). What data do you collect? What metrics are you monitoring most closely? What do the data reveal about your institution’s greatest strengths and areas for improvement with respect to post-completion outcomes? Please include any relevant data/reports in the appendix or as a separate attachment, including any data that captures outcomes by school/department/program.** |
| VCCS has data sharing agreements in place with the Virginia Employment Commission(VEC) and the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) to track student employment and wages. Data for credit, noncredit and dual enrolled students are matched 20 quarters prior to first enrollment, during enrollment and 20 quarters after exit. Colleges also collect job placement data through graduation surveys and telephone interviews with graduates. Aggregate data by college and by student level are shared on the VCCS Statistics web page: <https://www.vccs.edu/graduate-outcomes/> Metrics that are monitored include employment and/or transfer within 18 months of graduation or exit based on whether a student is dual enrolled, graduate of a career-technical or college-transfer program or a FastForward credentialer. VCCS also provides updates to the State Board annually on post-graduation outcomes.\*VCCS also monitors the Employment and Wage Outcomes available on the SCHEV research website for expanded timeframes.Based on these data, a primary strength of the VCCS is that our graduates remain in Virginia, living and working for Virginia employers. In FY 2020, nearly 1 million students educated by Virginia’s community colleges earned nearly $35.5 billion in wages in Virginia. However there are limitations to the data available and the details that may be derived from them. While we can assess employment and wages (including assessing wage increases from pre/post training completion data), the data cannot confirm that a student is employed in their field of study. Additionally, although SWIS data are useful for federal reporting, the data may not be used for other types of evaluation or research. Previously available state-to-state data sharing compacts revealed significant employment returns for colleges bordering other states. Additionally, the lack of available data on federal and armed forces workers previously available in the Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES), revealed additional employment in the northern Virginia and Hampton Roads/Tidewater region. Additionally, some graduates who are self-employed, such as those in skilled trades or transportation, or in small businesses are not included in the VEC Unemployment Insurance data. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\*NotesMarch 2022: [https://go.boarddocs.com/va/vccs/Board.nsf/files/CCKQZK6892B6/$file/VCCS%20wages%202022%5B38%5D.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/va/vccs/Board.nsf/files/CCKQZK6892B6/%24file/VCCS%20wages%202022%5B38%5D.pdf) March 2023: [https://go.boarddocs.com/va/vccs/Board.nsf/files/CPWU8X7AE1E7/$file/Near-term%20Graduate%20Outcomes%20DE%20and%20Grads.pptx](https://go.boarddocs.com/va/vccs/Board.nsf/files/CPWU8X7AE1E7/%24file/Near-term%20Graduate%20Outcomes%20DE%20and%20Grads.pptx)Research on VCCS Student Labor Market Outcomes(Impact of Stacked Credentials on Labor Market <https://www.vccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/ai20-317.pdf>)(Labor Market Returns of Some College No Degree Adults <https://www.vccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/ai20-240.pdf>)(Impact of Low Socioeconomic Status on Labor Market Returns <https://direct.mit.edu/edfp/article-abstract/doi/10.1162/edfp_a_00392/113529/Crossing-the-Finish-Line-but-Losing-the-Race?redirectedFrom=fulltext>) |

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| **C5. What specific strategies/actions, including potential changes to your program portfolio or curriculum, are you planning to take to maximize the career readiness and job attainment of all students across programs of study, including increasing early career exposure for students (e.g., internships) during their time at your institution? How will you draw on successes/challenges from prior initiatives?** |
| VCCS will continue to work with SCHEV’s VTOP office to expand internship opportunities for our students. We will also continue to work with DOLI to advance registered apprenticeships by providing related technical instruction and exploring an expansion of a model that has been growing whereby colleges serve as the sponsors or intermediaries for businesses seeking to implement apprenticeships. As outlined in section A3, VCCS will seek funding to support comprehensive regional career placement services for college students. We also hope to have Op6 support in our need to address Board of Nursing regulations and requirements that hinder clinical placement for our nursing and other healthcare-related students. Please see A3 for more details.  |

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| **C6. How do you intend to use existing/provided resources to execute those strategies? Will you be requesting incremental state resources? Please explicitly tie to Part I of your planning template.** |
| **Coaches and Advisors:** Colleges employ career coaches and advisors to assist students in making good career choices, choosing the proper programs to prepare for their chosen career, and then to take advantage of training and off-campus options to prepare for their careers. Faculty, coaches, and advisors are often most closely connected to industry representatives, and all colleges hold job fairs and invite industry representatives into the classrooms to talk about options for internships, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities. In recent years, several colleges have supported “signing days” during which high school seniors/graduates meet with employers on campuses and commit to programs the employers have identified as aligned to their needs, with the promise of guaranteed interviews and preferred hiring status when they complete their training.**Work-Based Learning, C2C, Apprenticeships:** VCCS and the colleges have been working with SCHEV’s VTOP office as it is getting off the ground to align to that office's actions to promote internships with businesses throughout the Commonwealth. VCCS will continue to maintain two positions that coordinate work-based learning and credit for prior learning across the system, maintain the [Credits2Careers](https://www.credits2careers.org/) (C2C) web portal, and coordinate with DOLI and business partners to provide apprenticeship related instruction, and, increasingly, to serve as intermediaries on the part of businesses that want to start registered apprenticeship programs. This last service is in its early stages, and if it grows, incremental state funding could be requested at a future date to support the college administrative costs for providing this service to businesses. **Comprehensive Job Placement:** However, what is critically lacking across the system is funding and staffing to provide comprehensive job placement services for students completing programs and credentials. The activities mentioned above are more passive in nature; what is needed is a career placement approach that is focused on direct interface across industries, real-time inventory of regional job openings with actual employers, tracking of job placement and employee progression, and ongoing job placement services for former students who seek to grow their careers. While some colleges offer some direct placement services, it is rare, and it is often conducted by staff with many other responsibilities. The VCCS anticipates asking for funding to provide these services in each of the 9 GO Virginia regions among the colleges. While such funding was included in the Governor’s introduced budget last year, its outcome remains unknown, and the amount that was included would not support the comprehensive services needed across the Commonwealth.  |

**WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT**

***Key question: How are your institution’s programs of study and degree conferrals aligned with the evolving talent needs of the Commonwealth?***

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| **C7. For which specific workforce needs is your institution best positioned to supply talent, based on regional, industry, or occupation alignment?** |
| Virginia’s Community Colleges are the Commonwealth’s largest provider of registered nurses annually, and are also best positioned to provide workers across the allied healthcare sector. With the support of Workforce Credential Grant/FastForward and G3 funding, colleges are able to support labor demand in the IT, healthcare, skilled trades/manufacturing, transportation/logistics, and heavy construction industries. Increasingly, businesses and industry organizations are turning to our colleges to support worker training in sustainable energy fields, including solar and wind power. All proposals for programs to be supported under FastForward or G3 must be submitted to the system office for review, and then for the State Board for Community Colleges’ review and approval. Approval rests on providing clear labor market information, supplemented by business review and support, that programming and credentials to be supported by state funds lead to occupations that show growth in the region. In the recent competition for funds under the one-time G3 innovation grants, colleges provided regional labor market information and specific business demands that were heavily focused on the healthcare, IT, and manufacturing and skilled trade sectors. In the latter, there is a particular emphasis on building out capacity to support much more training that will support infrastructure projects in the Commonwealth over the next decade in occupations related to road/tunnel/bridge construction, broadband expansion, and solar and wind energy construction, operations, and maintenance.Furthermore, ensuring that college programs are aligned to regional industry needs has been bolstered through the VCCS partnership with VOEE, which led to a comprehensive labor market analysis for each of the 9 GO Virginia regions which reflected college program alignment to the key occupational/industry growth over the coming decade.  |

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| **C8. What specific strategies/actions is your institution planning to take to better align your program offerings or degree conferrals to current and projected workforce needs? Please provide a list of specific programs you intend to sunset or grow in the next 6 years to increase alignment, partnerships/initiatives you intend to launch or deepen, etc. If you intend to launch any new programs, please explain why your institution is particularly well-suited to succeed in that area.** |
| A required part of any approval for a new program, whether it be for FastForward, G3, or another CTE program, is the provision of information for how the program or course of study is aligned with projected workforce needs. This includes labor market information as well as business specific information. Both the colleges and the system office use multiple LMI tools to analyze demand projections across industries and regions. We will use VOEE data, letters from employers, and job announcements in the service area. Policy requires all applied fields to have advisory committees of local representatives in the industry, and those committees must meet at least annually. This input will guide decisions to add or sunset programs, or to make changes in the content of the programs to stay current with industry needs and changes. Colleges will work regionally to consider areas where one college could offer a program that could at least put the lecture information online so that available faculty/clinical coordinators could be used to make the hands-on portion of the program available to other colleges in the region, or have weekend or evening labs that students from a little farther away could drive to. |

**SECTION D: STRATEGIC DEEP DIVE – FINANCIAL EFFECTIVENESS & SUSTAINABILITY**

**AFFORDABILITY FOR STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

***Key question: How is your institution accounting for and improving affordability for students and families?***

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| **D1. What specific strategies/actions do you plan to take to improve affordability moving forward across your overall student body and priority subpopulations, and what is the expected impact? Please account for a broad range of factors including the full cost of attendance, net price, time to degree, debt load, etc.** |
| Using previously approved General Assembly funding, the VCCS will continue public marketing of the G3 program. This innovative last dollar program provides financial support beyond traditional financial-aid allowing eligible students to address life challenges and the full cost of attending college. During the first year of implementation, 11,084 students received $18.6 million in G3 financial aid. Nearly 2,900 students earned degrees, certificates or credentials in high demand areas, 47% in healthcare fields. The VCCS will continue leveraging all available financial-aid resources to improve affordability for enrolled students. The VCCS uses state financial-aid funding to provide financial assistance for both credit and noncredit students. For students enrolled in FastForward noncredit programs, the VCCS sets aside at least $3.0 million in appropriated aid. This is in addition to Workforce Credential Grant (WCG) aid that covers the second and third-third of the cost of the program. Noncredit financial aid provides aid to cover the first third for qualified students, making the cost of FastForward credential zero for eligible students that complete a WCG eligible FastForward program.Note:FY 2022 G3 Infographic (<https://www.vccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/G3-Fact-Sheet-2022-FINAL.pdf>) |

**REVENUE**

***Key question: How is your institution approaching pricing and revenue management? What are the implications on long-term top-line financial health?***

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| **D2. Please explain the rationale behind your full pricing (i.e. published tuition & fees, including mandatory non-E&G fees) and financial aid award strategy (i.e. net tuition revenue projections). What data informed your assessment of T&F increase feasibility (e.g., market comparisons, student capacity to pay) and estimates of discounts/ waivers/unfunded scholarships? What informed your strategy around financial aid awards, merit and need-based, particularly for various student segments by income level and academic preparation?** |
| VCCS publishes a standard E&G tuition rate reflecting State Board intent for tuition and state funds to cover total educational delivery costs. The total mandatory tuition and fee rates cover education and general operating costs, technology support, parking and student life activities. While the $153.53 tuition rate is applied to all courses and is combined with current state funding it may not fully cover higher costs associated with in-demand programs such as nursing, welding, mechatronics, cyber-security and other career technical programs, thus limiting efforts to expand credit CTE course offerings. In addition to the cost of instruction, the cost of credentialing exams are not included in the cost of tuition for students in credit programs, therefore students in credit CTE programs are solely responsible for paying these costs.Financial aid to cover tuition is packaged primarily with federal and state financial aid, but also includes private scholarships and is based primarily on need. However, colleges have been modifying aid packaging paradigms to increase state awards made to low and middle-income students. For the 2021-22 aid year, 51,525 students only received grant aid, 6,675 received a combination of grants and loans, and only 3,909 students were packaged only with loans. With increased state financial-aid and G3 aid, VCCS student borrowing has declined since 2013 as shown in the Affordability Chart (B) on page 38 of the VCCS data pack. |

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| **D3. What do you expect to be the impact of your pricing/discounting approach on enrollment numbers/mix (if any) and net tuition revenue moving forward and why?** |
| At less than one-third the cost of attending a four-year institution, VCCS tuition rates already provide a cost-effective option for entry to higher-education via traditional associate degree and transfer curriculum. In addition, FastForward programs provide quick pathways from training to jobs at a very low cost for many students. Increasing the mix of noncredit students will expand general access but will more than likely not significantly alter the mix between credit and noncredit. Leveraging additional state investments, the VCCS could embed credential attainment in credit programs which could increase the number of students enrolling part-time in CTE course work while obtaining skills necessary to obtain jobs in an in-demand field. |

**COST EFFECTIVENESS**

***Key question: How has your institution maintained bottom-line financial health and focused investment on the levers that will drive improvements in student outcomes?***

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| **D4. Reflect on the categories/subcategories of cost that have recently experienced the most significant increases on an absolute or per-student basis. What have been the primary drivers of those increases? Please be specific and include supporting data.** |
| VCCS overall education and general operating costs increased from $826.5 million in FY2012 to $912.5 million in FY2022 (Source: DPB Expendwise Reporting Tool), representing a 10% increase in spending. The largest major category area of spending was $41.4 million in contractual services, a 42% increase. This category includes increased technology spend from $14.6 million to $24.7 million, a 144% increase. The largest absolute increase occurred in personal services increasing $57.5 million between 2012 and 2022, reflecting an overall increase of 9%. However, this increase corresponds with efforts by the General Assembly to address defined benefit pension liabilities, seeing a $24.2 million increase between 2012 and 2022, a 127% increase. Likewise, spending on the employer’s share of the state’s self-funded health insurance premium increased $31.2million, a 76% increase. This period also reflects employee compensation increases totaling $49.5 million for full-time employees, or 16% over the last 10 years. During this time, the General Assembly approved mandatory compensation increases five times between 2012 and 2022. The overall increase in personal services was mitigated by a $34.5 million, or 26%, reduction in wages for adjunct teaching faculty, reflecting reduced staffing as enrollments declined.The increased compensations and benefit adjustments over this period and the additional compensation and benefit adjustments authorized in FY2023 and FY2024 will have recurring fiscal impacts moving forward.  |

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| **D5. What specific strategies/actions do you plan to take to contain/reduce key costs and improve fiscal health going forward while improving student outcomes? What are your objectives and what have been your results to date of any already-launched initiatives? What is the expected impact and timeframe of these strategies? Include any short-term costs that would need to be incurred to implement the strategies.** |
| The partnership funding methodology of the General Assembly (GA) to provide approximately 58 to 60% of mandatory compensation and benefit adjustments, property and liability insurance, and mandatory state finance and payroll technology platforms, mitigates the need for the VCCS to fully fund these costs with tuition. In addition, the GA has taken proactive steps over the last four years by providing additional resources that mitigated the need for additional tuition through its tuition moderation funding. Tuition moderation funding since 2019 totals $52.2 million and represents 54% of additional support provided by the state. In return for these funds, VCCS has maintained tuition at its 2019 value, providing approximately $25 per credit hour recurring value to students. Of the remaining $44.7 million, $35.7 million were central appropriation base adjustments for the state share of state mandated increases (e.g. salary, benefits, Cardinal). Only $9.1 million, or 9% of the increased funding, covered strategic initiatives (i.e. additional advisors, G3 marketing, legislative amendments).Retaining the additional state resources in the base budget allows the VCCS to hold the line on current commitments. However, the additional resources requested in the six-year plan are needed for the VCCS to address the strategic priorities in section A3 and drive key outcomes in section C2.Even with modest increases in per FTE funding, VCCS remains the least funded of all Virginia public institutions of higher education in per-FTE fund – $4,324 per FTE at VCCS compared to $7,641 per FTE, the average of all public higher education institutions in Virginia\*. Moreover, VCCS remains among the lowest funded community colleges nationally: the per FTE expenditure at VCCS is in just the 23rd percentile when compared to all other community colleges in the nation\*\*. \*SCHEV’s [*Virginia Cost and Funding Need Study Report*](https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2022/RD392/PDF), July 2022\*\*Virginia House Appropriations Committee [2023 Session Revenue and Budget Outlook](https://hac.virginia.gov/Committee/files/2022/11-14-22/II_a%20-%20Revenue%20and%20Budget%20Outlook%20FINAL.pdf), November 2022 |
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| **D6. Provide information about your institution’s highest-priority E&G capital projects and requests (including new construction as well as renovations) over the six-year plan period and how they align to your enrollment trajectory, student outcomes improvement plans, or other strategic priorities. Please also reflect on your current E&G facilities utilization (especially classrooms, labs and student service areas), particularly in light of any recent trends that might impact space needs (e.g., enrollment trends, shifting learning modalities). How has square footage per student changed over time and why? What efforts have you made to reassess and further optimize the use of your existing facilities, and what has been the impact of those efforts to date? What do you intend to do in the next six years to increase utilization?** |
| Capital ProjectsThe VCCS 2024-30 six-year capital plan is prioritized to address highest needs in the first biennium of the plan (2024-26) and strives to address the needs of all 23 community colleges. Project are prioritized to meet the following:* Address mandated court orders, other mandates and consent agreements
* Emergency needs
* Equipment for previously authorized capital projects under construction during the biennium
* Renovation and replacement of facilities exceeding useful life
* Address deferred maintenance, structural, mechanical, electrical deficiencies
* Strategic educational and workforce needs of the Commonwealth

The top capital requests for 2024-26 includes equipment requests for two previously authorized and funded projects that will be under construction. Of the top ten unfunded requests, three projects will replace facilities that have exceeded their useful life expectancies, renovate or expand seven facilities including Renovate and Expand Rooker Hall for Advanced Manufacturing and Credentialing at New River CC, Renovate the A. L. Philpott Technical Center & MET Complex Building 1 at Patrick & Henry CC, and Renovate and Expand Nursing Building at Virginia Highlands CC. New construction projects must either demonstrate a space shortage need based on anticipated enrollments, or must have a strong programmatic justification to be included among priority projects in the first biennium of the six-year capital plan.Because of the pace at which deferred maintenance is being addressed across the VCCS, much of the deferred maintenance will need to be addressed at some point in the future. In addition, a comprehensive modernization of VCCS campuses will need to be realized. VCCS will explore options for a statewide bond issue to finance the modernization of our 40 campuses.Inventory of Space and UtilizationAccording to the fall 2022 space inventory, VCCS education and general space stands at 5,046,136 square feet of assignable space, which amounts to approximately 163 assignable square feet per full-time equivalent student (FTE) taking courses on-campus (credit and Fast-forward). ASF per student served on campus. Space increased 69,949 square feet since the same period in 2018, at just over 1% growth, due primarily to the opening of a new student support services and library building at Southside Virginia CC, the William H. Talley Workforce Building at Brightpoint CC and the new BioSciences Building at Blue Ridge CC. While SCHEV has not reported on higher education space utilization in recent years, the VCCS typically exceeded the minimum thresholds for classrooms and labs. However the specialized nature of CTE labs may not align well with traditional science lab use compared to four-year institutions. Welding, automotive and HVAC labs have workstations that are not as concentrated as standard biology or science labs. CTE and FastForward instructional spaces require hands-on learning and use of specialized simulators, mannequins and real world job related state of technology related equipment. |

**SECTION E: BUDGET REQUESTS**

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| **E1. Provide additional information for any budget requests in Part I of your planning template that are not described elsewhere in your narrative.** |
| In addition to the items covered elsewhere in the narrative, the Virginia Community College System has experienced significant inflationary pressures in recent years. Even if future inflation rates ease – and it is our hope that they continue to do so in the coming biennium – the impact of recent inflationary pressures remain. The recent hyperinflationary period has driven ongoing cost increases, particularly in contractual services, utilities, and information technology costs. |

**SECTION F: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT**

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| **F1. Provide a link to any report your institution has produced about its economic development contributions. You may also share it in the appendix or as an attachment** |
| VCCS has recently commissioned an economic impact study to be conducted to better document the impact of Virginia’s Community Colleges on the Commonwealth, as well as to project the impact of the achievement of this six year plan on the supply and demand of high demand and high growth jobs. This report will be available in December 2023. Individual colleges are also encouraged to conduct studies on their own regional impacts.This work will build off the impact of the Workforce Credential Grant as documented by the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia: <https://www.schev.edu/home/showpublisheddocument/2785/638206851061430000> |

**SECTION G: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND INQUIRY, FREE SPEECH, ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT**

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| **G1. Provide a copy of any policy or reports your institution has produced and provide information about annual training or orientation related to this topic.** |
| * The Chancellor’s Advisory Council of Presidents (ACOP) reviewed the Bipartisan Policy Center’s *Campus Free Expression: A New Roadmap* (Nov. 2021) and discussed key takeaways from the Roadmap. The Interim Chancellor asked presidents to engage leadership teams and faculty in professional development activities related to campus free expression.
* The Academic Services Advisory Council and the Council of Deans and Directors participated in campus free expression tabletop exercises at their spring 2023 quarterly meeting.
* On March 16, 2023, the State Board for Community Colleges endorsed a statement of its unequivocal support for free expression and viewpoint diversity on college campuses and pledging to uphold inclusivity, academic freedom, free expression, and an environment that promotes civil discourse across differences.
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**SECTION H: NEW SCHOOLS, SITES, AND MERGERS**

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| **H1. Provide information on any new instructional sites, schools, or mergers supported by all types of funding that your institution is considering or planning to undertake during the six-year period.** |
| Virginia’s Community Colleges are constantly engaged in addressing unmet business and community needs. This means delivering instruction at every Virginia high school and identifying temporary satellite sites that are frequently provided by employers and communities. These satellite sites are assembled and disassembled quickly to meet short term workforce demands.There are no known plans for establishing new campuses. Please see the attachment summarizing a survey of colleges regarding new programming and new sites.  |

**[OPTIONAL] SECTION I: RESEARCH**

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| **I1. [OPTIONAL] Highlight any strategic research priorities, programs, or key areas of investment (e.g., hiring plans, critical research agendas, interdisciplinary centers, business partnerships, commercialization efforts) and IP dissemination and commercialization priorities you intend to pursue over the next 6 years that have not already been mentioned in this narrative. What are the anticipated benefits to your faculty attraction/retention strategy, student value proposition, and the economic competitiveness of the Commonwealth?** |
| N/A |

**[OPTIONAL] SECTION J: COLLABORATION**

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| **J1. [OPTIONAL] Outline any existing or potential initiatives you have not already highlighted in this narrative that feature collaboration across public higher education institutions (and other state agencies as appropriate) in furthering the goals outlined in sections B-D. What is the expected impact and in what timeframe? What is the timeline for the initiative and how far along is it? What (if anything) would be required from a budget or policy perspective to facilitate the success of the initiative?** |
| VCCS relies on several interagency partnerships to assist in fulfilling its mission. As the primary workforce training provider in the Commonwealth, we are often called upon to participate in coordinated efforts to attract businesses to Virginia (or to help businesses expand), as well as to target specific populations. Additionally, years of coordination with our 4-year partners have resulted in more streamlined pathways from community college to university studies for our students. Examples are provided below.* VCCS and VEDP have a formal partnership that guides the deployment of resources through the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program (recently named the #1 customized workforce training program in the country). Colleges and VTAP representatives have worked together in recent years to bring in major investments by Lego, Tyson, Blue Star, Hitachi, and others.
* VCCS has worked with the Virginia Department of Social Services for several years to target recruitment of TANF and SNAP recipients leading to enrollment in FastForward and other programming to help recipients achieve employment that leads to self-sufficiency.
* VCCS and the Virginia Department of Education partner on the PluggedIn program, an integrated education and training program, whereby students are concurrently enrolled in both GED and career and technical education, which accelerates their progression toward a high school equivalency and a high demand credential.
* VCCS often provides the related technical instruction required for registered apprenticeships and works closely with the Department of Labor and Industry to support apprenticeship
* Some colleges are beginning to serve as either sponsors or intermediaries for companies who wish to participate in registered apprenticeship but that need assistance with the associated processes.
* TransferVA is a partnership between VCCS and SCHEV with a goal to streamline the transfer process so that students do not lose credits in the process. Transfer VA outcomes include guaranteed general education transfer programs (Passport and Uniform Certificate of General Studies); pathway maps to guide students in choosing the right courses for their transfer majors; and a transfer portal that provides transparent transfer information for students, parents, advisors, and counselors.
* SCHEV and VCCS updated the guaranteed admission articulation agreements to include options guaranteed admission to specific majors and for university acceptance of associate degrees earned by dual enrolled students.
* VCCS anticipates a close working relationship with the newly formed Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement.
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**[OPTIONAL] SECTION K: STATE POLICY**

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| **K1. [OPTIONAL] Use this section to outline any state policy changes you have not already mentioned in this narrative that would enhance your ability to achieve greater success on the topics, strategies, and initiatives referenced in this narrative. What existing policies, if any, are hindering your ability to maximize outcomes and value for students? What new policies might create conditions that are more conducive to achieving those goals? What strategies or initiatives would these policy changes enable your institution to do or try that you are not yet able to do today? Please be as specific as possible.** |
| 1. Reaffirm VCCS as the commonwealth’s preferred workforce education provider. As other entities seek state funding to deliver high-cost workforce education programs, it should be understood that it is more efficient and cost effective for the VCCS, with its statewide reach and capacity to scale up training, to coordinate and deliver education and training to meet the Commonwealth’s workforce needs.
2. Remove program classification codes (CIPs) from G3 budget language and engage the Virginia Office of Education Economics in determining which programs are funded through G3, to include pathways to high demand baccalaureate degree programs such as computer science and teacher education. Computer science is a high-demand career field in Virginia, but many university graduates take jobs in other states. Adding computer science transfer as a G3-eligible program will provide access for students who are more likely to stay in Virginia after they finish the bachelor’s degree. Including teacher education transfer programs as G3-eligible will reduce student debt for future teachers and expand the number of licensed teachers to address Virginia’s teacher shortage crisis, especially in rural communities.
3. Change language in the Code to reflect definitions of dual enrollment and concurrent enrollment for high school students. This change, which is needed to differentiate between high school-based dual enrollment and college-based concurrent enrollment, will support VDOE and VCCS in scaling opportunities for high school students to earn meaningful credentials, including degrees, certificates, and FastForward certifications.
4. Establish VCCS as the Commonwealth’s provider for dual and concurrent enrollment. VCCS has well-established partnerships with K12 and can build on those relationships to scale high-school based dual enrollment and college-based concurrent enrollment to meet Governor Youngkin’s aspiration for every high school student to graduate with a meaningful credential.
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**[OPTIONAL] SECTION L: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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| **L1. [OPTIONAL] Use this final section to provide any additional context and/or supporting materials you feel should be incorporated into the six-year planning process.** |
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