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Media Contact: Lynn Briggs
Director of Community and Media Relations
lbriggs@iwcs.k.12.va.us

**ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY SCHOOLS RECOGNIZED WITH INNOVATION AWARD
BY HAMPTON ROADS WORKFORCE COUNCIL**

Isle of Wight Co, VA – October 4, 2018: Isle of Wight County Schools was recognized by Opportunity Inc., the Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board, during its 2018 Annual Meeting and Workforce Innovation Awards ceremony, which highlighted the organization’s workforce development programs, services, and accomplishments over the past year. The meeting took place on September 26 at the Westin Virginia Beach Town Center.

The Annual Meeting served as an unveiling and announcement of the Workforce Development Board’s new regional and statewide brands. To better communicate the organization’s role as the regional convener of workforce development, Opportunity Inc. announced the retirement of its name today and will now operate as the Hampton Roads Workforce Council. In addition, the One Stop Workforce Center and affiliate sites will transition to a new statewide brand Virginia Career Works, which Governor Terry McAuliffe and then Governor-elect Ralph Northam unveiled on January 8, 2018. Each local workforce center — Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Franklin — will also have a local identifier as part of the Virginia Career Works Hampton Roads Region. This new brand and the services it represents is a commitment to building a stronger, unified workforce in Virginia.

Within the last year, the Hampton Roads Workforce Council/Opportunity Inc. served 3,950 businesses and employers; assisted 11,962 youth and young adults with job placements, post-secondary opportunities, and workforce readiness workshops; placed 495 customers in jobs paying an average of \$32,282; and served more than 1,600 veterans seeking employment.

During the meeting, President and CEO, Shawn Avery shared several new announcements, including the development of the Southeastern Regional Workforce Collaborative — a new partnership with the Hampton Roads Workforce Council and Greater Peninsula Workforce Development Board, formerly the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development.

The meeting closed on a celebratory note with the 2018 Workforce Innovation Awards ceremony, which recognizes businesses, community organizations, educational institutions, and individuals for their longstanding commitment to workforce development and impact on the Hampton Roads economy.



Superintendent Dr. Jim Thornton accepted the award along with a congratulatory letter from Senator Mark Warner commending the division's commitment to preparing young people for successful careers. Also attending the ceremony with Thornton were Susan Goetz, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Jeff Mordica, Director of Innovation and Strategic Planning.

"Being honored with an Innovation Award is a testament to the importance we have placed on workforce development," said Thornton. "The restructuring of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, with an emphasis on authentic experiences and industry credentials, ensures Isle of Wight County Schools is fulfilling its promise of preparing students to be college, career and life ready."

The nomination for Isle of Wight County Schools focused on the significant redesign of the division's CTE program to better serve the needs of students and to address concerns from the business community of the shortage of highly-skilled candidates for employment. The division has increased student access to quality programs, including culinary arts, welding, manufacturing, nursing, building trades and a twenty-five acre working farm known as the Land Lab, which allow students numerous opportunities to discover their unique gifts and talents. Businesses and industries have been eager to support the division's work as it will provide them with a pool of highly skilled candidates for employment.

Other organizations and individuals recognized with Innovation Awards include:

- Community – The Chesapeake Department of Human Services Division of Community Programs
- Business – Bank of America
- Innovator - Virginia Natural Gas
- Elected Official – Chris Stolle, Virginia House of Delegates, 83rd District
- Workforce Champion of the Year – Bill Crow, President, Virginia Ship Repair Association

About the Hampton Roads Workforce Council (formerly Opportunity Inc.)

Established by the Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board, the Hampton Roads Workforce Council, formerly Opportunity Inc., oversees federally funded workforce development programs for South and Western Hampton Roads. The Hampton Roads Workforce Council provides strategic workforce development solutions designed to assist businesses in accessing qualified workers and jobseekers in search of suitable job openings and training opportunities to bolster their earning potential.



Superintendent of Isle of Wight County Schools, Dr. Jim Thornton (center), accepts the Innovation Award in Education from Hampton Roads Workforce Development Council President and CEO, Shawn Avery (left), and Board Chair, Delceno Miles (right).

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