

## Introduction: The Need to Increase Student Achievement

A critical factor in any state's economic success is an effective, educated workforce. The workplace environment has become one of perpetual change where workers must be lifelong learners to cope with technological advances and a hyper-competitive market-place. Experts estimate that by 2018, at least 65 percent of all jobs will require some type of postsecondary education or training.

There is great concern among parents, educators and politicians about whether our students are sufficiently prepared for current and future learning experiences and to compete in the global economy. Many ask, "How are Virginia students doing?"



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## Introduction: Assessing Success

VLDS merges data from a number of agencies to allow researchers to glean insights that simply were not available previously. The data can help identify successful trends and innovations as well as areas of need. Before we can move forward, however, we need to understand where we are, what is working well, and what isn't. So, one of the first questions we wanted to address was student achievement.



## INSIGHT POWERED BY VLDS:

What factors affect student success in school and in the workplace?

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## Factors in Student Success: Diplomas

We examined VLDS data to see whether or not there was a correlation between the types of diplomas high school graduates earned and whether they were more likely to enroll in, succeed and graduate from college.

Advanced Diploma Requirements		Standard Diploma Requirements	
English	4 credits	English	4 credits
Mathematics	4 credits	Mathematics	3 credits
Lab Science	4 credits	Lab Science	3 credits
History & Social Sciences	4 credits	History & Social Sciences	3 credits
Foreign Languages	4 credits	Foreign Languages	0 credits



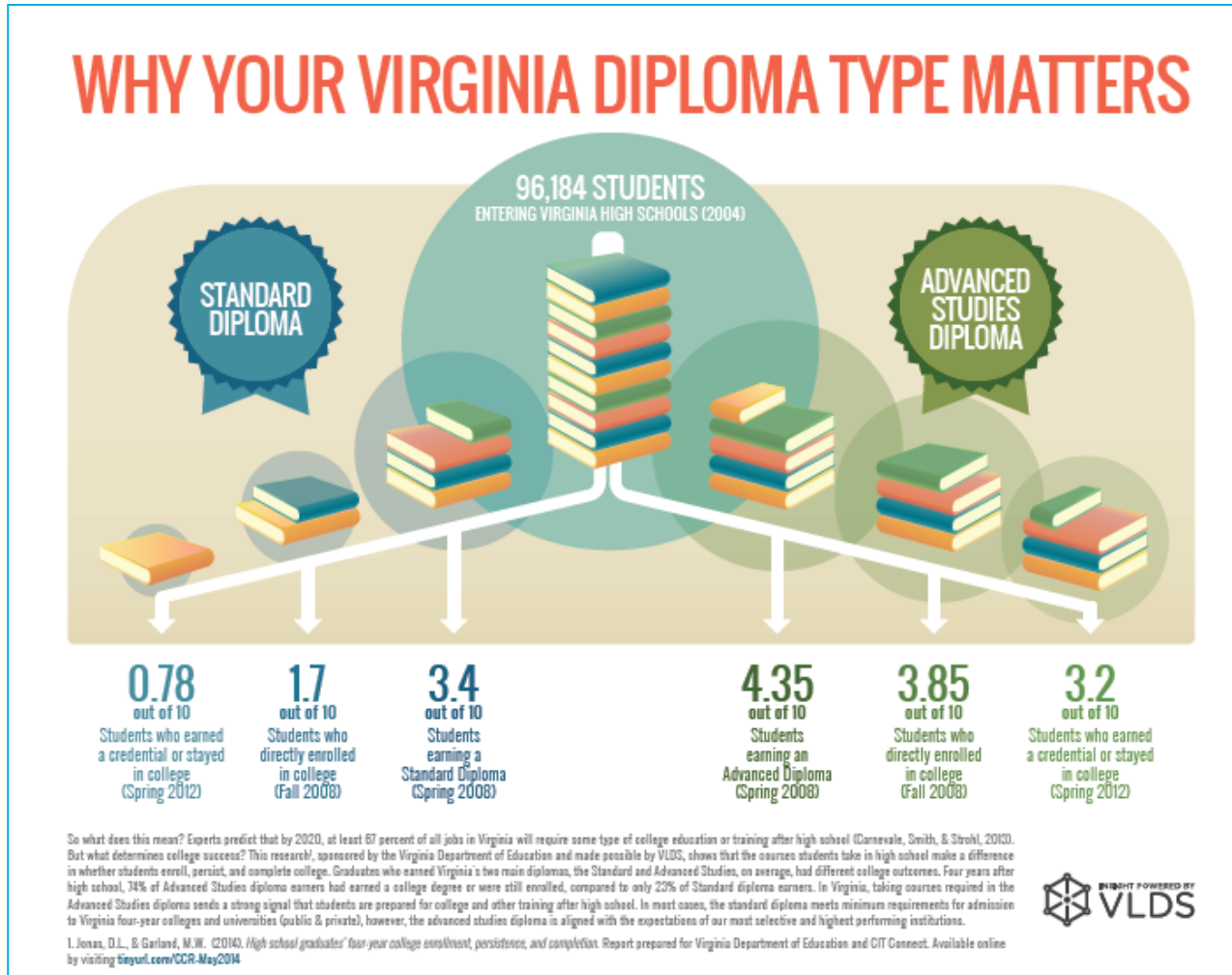
## INSIGHT POWERED BY VLDS:

DOES DIPLOMA TYPE MATTER?

The answer was a resounding **YES!**

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## Factors in Student Success: Diploma Types Matter



[Click here](#) for a full-screen version of this infographic.

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## Factors in Student Success: Virginia Initiatives

Once we learned about diploma types, the next natural question became, “Are there Initiatives in Virginia that have had a positive impact on students?”

There are a number of initiatives and studies in Virginia aimed at helping students increase their achievements and enhance their eligibility for higher education. One of these was a unique program that paired students with mentors. Did the program help? Again, we looked to the VLDS data for answers.

### INSIGHT POWERED BY VLDS:

CAN COACHING AND MENTORING  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



**YES!**

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## Factors in Student Success: Career Coach Program

Virginia launched the Career Coach Program in 2005 to help students define their career goals and the paths necessary to achieving their goals. A key objective of the program was to increase the numbers of students who enter and succeed in post-secondary education.

130 Career Coaches



180  
Schools



2,753 Completed  
Surveys on the Value of  
Written Career Plans



3,189 Written Career Plans



4,555 Students

What did students think  
about the program?

Did they think it was  
helpful?

Did they feel having a  
career plan was useful?

Are there specific ways  
the career plan  
influences career  
decisions?

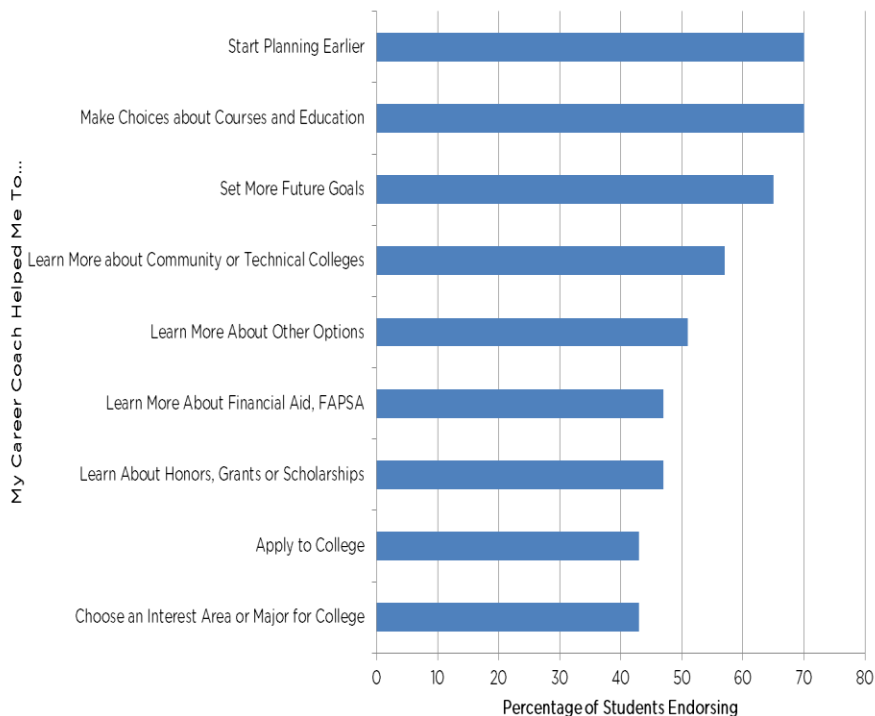
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# Factors in Student Success: Career Coach Program

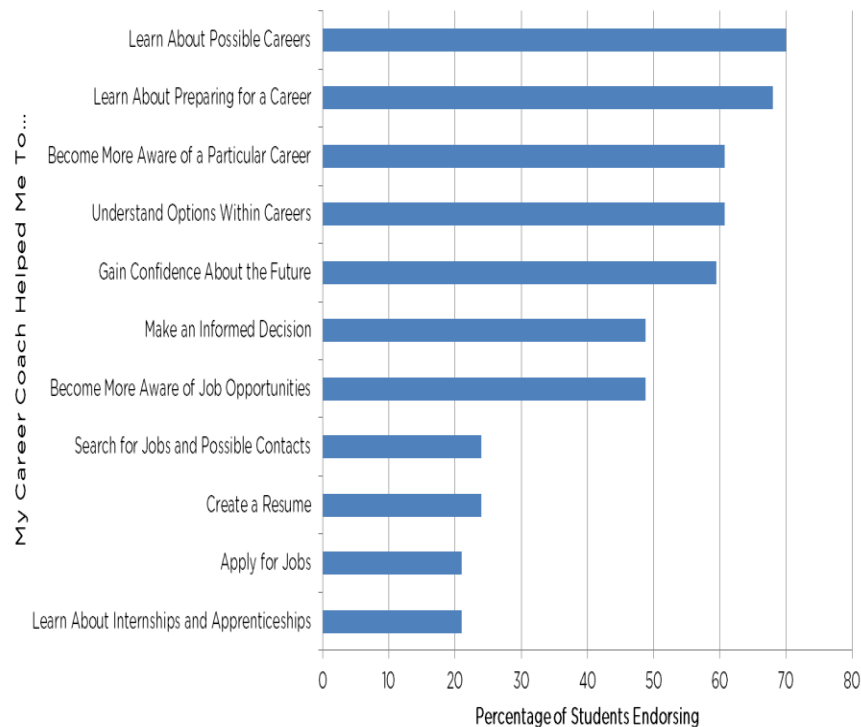
## What Students Thought: How Coaches Help

### Student Survey Results

#### How Coaches Help for Planning and College



#### How Coaches Help Related to Careers and Jobs



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## Factors in Student Success: Career Coach Program

What Students Thought: Students Rate Coaches and the Program

**Student Participants:** 46% seniors, Remaining 54% evenly divided among freshmen, sophomores and juniors. 40% could be considered “first generation” prospective college students (neither parent attended college)

### Rating Coaches

*Coach Rating:*  
**B to A+**

*Average Rating:* Between good and excellent.

*Scores Based On:* Responsiveness to Questions, Assistance with the Career Plan, Knowledge of Career Information, Interest in Student Needs, and Availability.

STUDENT FEEDBACK ON PROGRAM IMPACT	PERCENT OF THOSE SURVEYED
Nearly all students indicated some change regarding college, career or job	94
Students were more likely to attend a community college	48
Students were more likely to attend a four-year school	46
Students were more likely to have a career that matches student goals	42
Of those who completed a written career plan...	
Viewed the program as valuable	88
Rated the program as either very valuable or extremely valuable	61

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## Factors in Student Success: Career Coach Program

**“IN WHAT WAYS HAS YOUR CAREER PLAN BEEN HELPFUL OR VALUABLE TO YOU?”**

**IDENTIFIES LIFE AMBITIONS TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE**

It helped me figure out what I was going to do, what I would benefit from it, and what I would need to accomplish to get where I need to be.

**TRANSLATES LIFE PLANS INTO SPECIFIC GOALS**

It helped me see what I have to do and it also shows me the pace at which I have to do these things.

**ENHANCES CONFIDENCE**

Helped me see a picture of what my future would look like and give me confidence in that.

**EXPANDS AWARENESS OF AVAILABLE CAREER OPTIONS.**

It helped me learn about possible opportunities and jobs, along w/possible careers in my field of study.

**LEADS TO VALUABLE INFORMATION**

Helped outline what is in demand and what isn't. It also helped me see what I like and don't like.

**NARROWS CAREER INTERESTS AND ADDS FOCUS.**

It helped me narrow down what I would like to do for a career and what classes I should take.

**CLARIFIES NECESSARY STEPS.**


It has helped me decide exactly what career I want and what I need to do to get that career.

**REVEALS POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF HIGH SCHOOL CHOICES.**

It helped me realize that college is just around the corner and that the decisions I make as of now can either broaden or slim my chances of colleges.

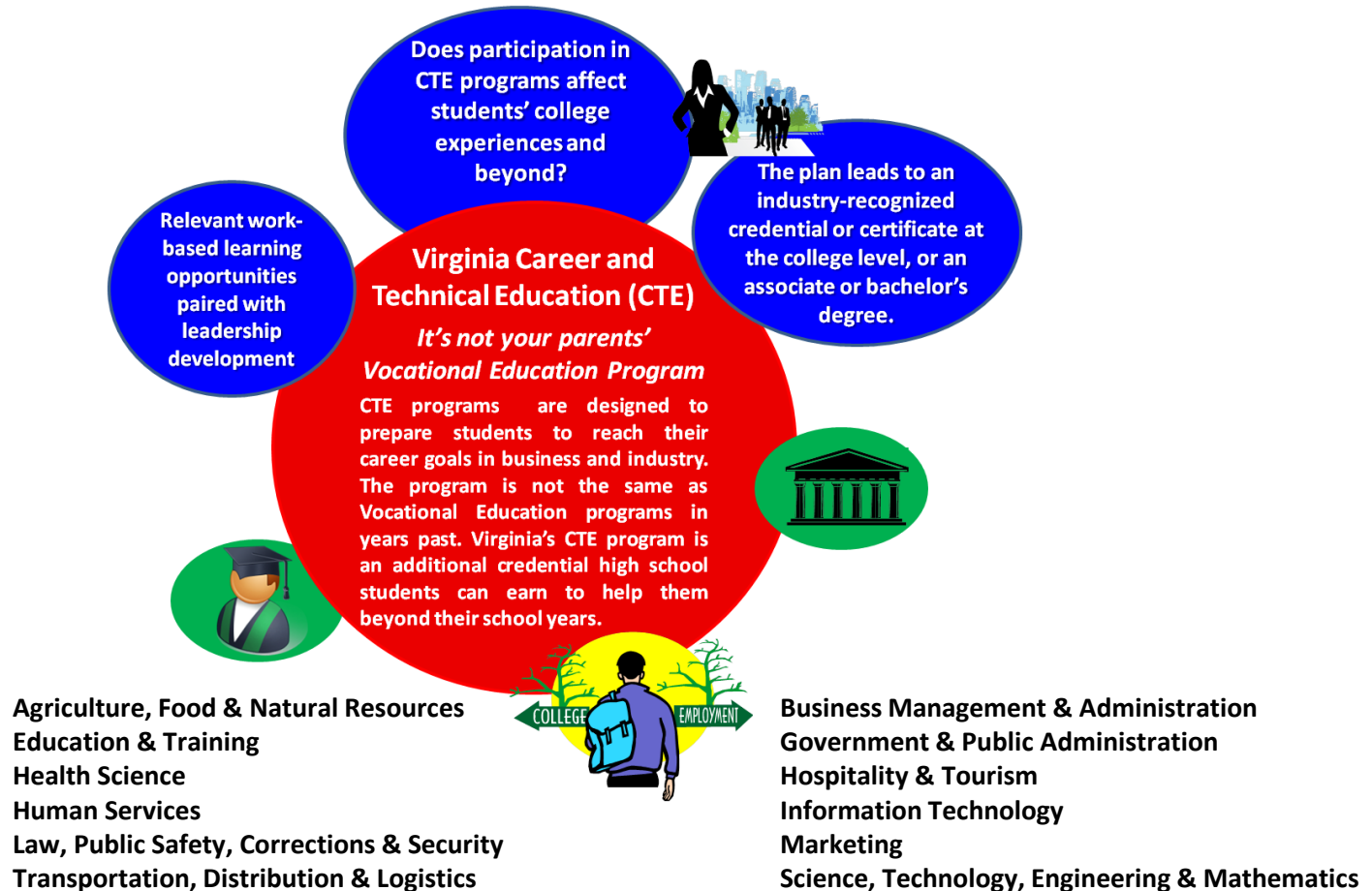
**EXPANDS INFORMATION ABOUT MAJORS AND SHOWS REQUIRED COLLEGE CLASSES.**

It has helped me to discover which colleges and careers are more realistic in my own life.

  
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## Factors in Student Success: Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program

Each year, nearly half of Virginia's high school graduates earn CTE certification, which assists them in developing workplace readiness and industry-specific skills.



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## Factors in Student Success: Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program

We were interested in discovering what impact the CTE program had on students' college experiences and earnings potential. Perhaps the most striking difference that we observed during our study was the edge that CTE completers had regardless of the diploma type. Combining CTE completion with an Advanced Studies diploma, for example, gave students the most significant advantage over any other diploma or combination of credentials.

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE 2008 AND 2009 GRADUATING CLASSES

- ⇒ By the end of the 5-year study period, approximately 57 percent of CTE completers and 64 percent of students not enrolled in the program had earned college credentials.
- ⇒ If a student left college before graduating, CTE completers had higher average wages than other students, regardless of the types of high school diplomas they earned.

**The difference in wages was apparent even as soon as three months after graduation from college!**

### WAGES THREE-MONTHS AFTER COLLEGE GRADUATION BY HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA TYPE

Non Participant Standard	Non Participant Advanced	CTE Standard	CTE Advanced
\$5,716	\$6,855	\$5,648	\$7,275

- ⇒ Among students who graduated college with a Bachelor's degree, CTE completers who earned Advanced Studies diplomas in high school had the highest average quarterly wages.

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## Factors in Student Success: Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program

Since finding that students who earned an Advanced Studies diploma were more likely to enroll in college and to continue on to graduation, we wondered if also completing the CTE program provided additional benefits. VLDS data was a perfect resource to determine what benefits might accrue to these students as they move from K-12 to college and into the workplace.

### INSIGHT POWERED BY VLDS:

Does combining an Advanced Studies diploma with  
CTE certification give students an edge?



**YES!**

Researchers examined the wage earnings of the Advanced Studies students after college graduation. They found that in the graduating class of 2008, students who graduated high school with Advanced Studies diplomas and CTE certification earned nearly \$2,000 by the end of the first quarter after college graduation.

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## Conclusion

Innovation in educational programs and processes can translate to increased student achievement. More rigorous programs, when combined with mentoring and practical experience are associated with a greater likelihood of enrolling in college, earning a degree and increased earnings potential.

As more agencies join the VLDS partnership and contribute their data, even greater insights will be available to researchers. These insights not only will allow more in depth evaluation of programs and processes, but will facilitate conversations about how best to serve the needs of students and citizens in Virginia.



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