



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

REPORT

**Progress Report on the Virginia Board of Education's
Development of a *Profile of a Virginia Graduate***

NOVEMBER 2016

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Introduction

The Board of Education is redesigning the high school experience and developing a *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* to better prepare all students for life after high school. The Board believes that the education provided during the k-12 grades should be of high quality and enable all students to achieve and apply academic knowledge, acquire productive workplace skills, exhibit responsible citizenship, and align their skills and interests with career opportunities. The [Profile of a Virginia Graduate](#) describes the knowledge, skills, competencies and experiences students must attain prior to graduation to be prepared for success in college and/or the workplace, competitive for the jobs of today and of tomorrow's global economy, and successful in life. The Profile creates a framework for revisions to the Commonwealth's graduation requirements that will go into effect with freshmen entering high school in the fall of the 2018-2019 school year, or the graduating class of 2022, and that will be reflected in amendments to the [Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia](#) (Standards of Accreditation or SOA).

In 2014, the Virginia Board of Education committed to conducting a comprehensive review of their regulations governing student achievement and graduation requirements, as well as the School Performance Report Card and school accreditation. Based on current estimates, by 2021 about 500,000 new jobs will be created in Virginia—many in scientific, technical, or healthcare areas. To be eligible and competitive for job opportunities in tomorrow's economy, Virginia's public school students will need opportunities to learn about multiple subject areas and to use personal skills during their educational years. The need to reconsider how Virginia children are educated stems from the evolution to a complex economy, with diverse and rapid change as underlying forces, rather than stability and standard workforce practices. Moreover, Board member discussions with businesses, the military, representatives of k-12 education and higher education, and parents about necessary work-ready skills and knowledge generate lists that include communication, interpersonal skills, responsibility, problem-solving and innovation.

As determined by the Board through its committee discussions and through communications with stakeholders, a Virginia high school graduate should be able to:

- achieve and apply appropriate academic knowledge;
- align knowledge, skills, and personal interests with career opportunities;
- attain and demonstrate productive workplace skills, qualities, and behaviors;
- value and build connections with diverse communities; and
- understand personal and civic responsibility and governmental structure.

The Profile and subsequent changes in the regulations for requirements for graduation will become driving factors in further reforms to the State's assessment and accountability systems. The purpose of this report is to document the Board's progress in developing the Profile.

Background

Through the work of its Committee on School and Division Accountability, the Board has discussed and considered information from other states and education stakeholders to shape and expand student achievement expectations for graduation. In September 2015, the draft framework for the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* was introduced. The draft Profile presents descriptions of the overlapping areas of competencies and experiences a student should have attained when completing high school: content knowledge; workplace skills; community engagement and civic responsibility; and career exploration.

In addition, the Standards of Learning (SOL) Innovation Committee has provided support and recommendations for the development of the Profile. In its November 2015 report, the committee included a recommendation that:

The BOE, in collaboration with stakeholders representing K-12 education, institutions of higher education, business and industry, policymakers and community leaders should develop a *Profile of a Virginia Graduate*. In the development of such a Profile, the BOE should consider the “5 Cs” – critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship – needed for success in the Virginia economy

During the 2016 Session, the Governor and the General Assembly supported the development of a *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* through the introduction and adoption of legislation. [SB 336](#) and [HB 895](#) directed the Board to redefine the expectations of high school graduates in the Commonwealth. See Appendix A. These bills amend § [22.1-253.13:4.D](#) of the [Code of Virginia](#) (Va. Code) to require the Board to:

1. Develop and implement, in consultation with stakeholders representing elementary and secondary education, higher education, and business and industry in the Commonwealth and including parents, policymakers, and community leaders in the Commonwealth, a *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* that identifies the knowledge and skills that students should attain during high school in order to be successful contributors to the economy of the Commonwealth, giving due consideration to critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship.
2. Emphasize the development of core skill sets in the early years of high school.
3. Establish multiple paths toward college and career readiness for students to follow in the later years of high school. Each such pathway shall include opportunities for internships, externships, and credentialing.

The redefined high school graduation expectations are to be in place for the freshman class of 2018.

In addition, the legislation directed the Board of Education to submit a report to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health no later than December 1, 2016 on the status of the implementation of the legislation.

Current Status and Actions Taken

In February 2016 a “strawman” proposal for the Profile, outlining revised graduation requirements and the “Virginia Diploma,” was introduced to stimulate thought and discussion from stakeholders. In response, the Board, as part of its deliberations, reached out to stakeholders to be thorough, informed, and inclusive in its work. Board members have structured roundtables and presentations to elicit comment from the following stakeholders:

- Local school superintendents
- The SOL Innovation Committee
- School division recipients of high school innovation grants
- Higher education deans, professors, and admission representatives
- Governor’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Academies
- Career and Technical Education Centers
- Seniors who have completed capstone and applied learning projects as a local requirement for graduation
- School division English Language Learner coordinators
- Military recruiters from the Navy, Army, Coast Guard, and Air Force
- The Board’s Advisory Committee for Career and Technical Education
- Secondary and elementary school principals
- Secondary and elementary school counselors
- Secondary and elementary school teachers (including gifted, special education, and general education)
- Business representatives from multiple career clusters
- Parents
- Representatives of local school boards
- Representatives from education professional representing instruction content areas

Actions Taken at the May 25, 2016 Work Session

At its May 25, 2016 work session, the Board of Education reviewed, amended, and confirmed a draft *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* and discussed proposals for requirements and credits that would be necessary for graduation. Board members emphasized the need to express the Profile in straightforward and easy-to-understand language and provided suggestions for further clarity and revisions. The members then reviewed proposals to implement the concepts of the Profile. The proposals and Board decisions are summarized below.

Areas of Board Consensus:

The Board members agreed that the following proposals move forward to operationalize the Profile.

1. Increase Career Exposure, Exploration, and Planning. The Board endorsed expanding opportunities for career exposure, exploration, and planning for all students.
2. Increase Internships and Work-Based Learning Experiences for All Students. The Board endorsed the use of internships and other work-based learning opportunities as a viable means to meet graduation requirements and to earn standard credits.
3. Expand the Use of Locally-Developed Performance Assessments and Reduce the Number of Verified Credits. The Board supported expanding the use of locally-developed performance assessments for demonstration of content mastery in history and social science, and reducing the number of verified credits needed for both the Advanced Studies and Standard Diplomas to four.
4. Emphasize the “5 Cs.” The Board supported integrating the key skills of 21st century education – critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship.

Proposals for Further Consideration

No consensus was reached on implementation of the following proposals; however, Board members have iterated that these proposals, as well as others, may be considered throughout their process of operationalizing the Profile.

1. Establish one Virginia diploma (versus the current two). The Board indicated interest in exploring merging the Advanced Studies and Standard Diplomas into a single Virginia Diploma but did not endorse moving ahead with this action.
2. Establish a requirement for Applied Knowledge and Experiential Learning. The Board expressed support for exposing students to and giving them opportunities to demonstrate the 5 Cs of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creative thinking, and citizenship as a requirement for graduation, which would be documented by the school division. The Board recommended the use of a Capstone Project to certify this requirement but would allow local school boards the option to substitute other means. Department staff will further develop the concept of an Applied Knowledge and Experiential Learning requirement.

3. Increase mathematics requirements. The Board discussed increasing the expectations in mathematics for all students.
4. Establish alternative options for Science. The Board expressed an interest in further exploration of alternative approaches to achieve science standard credits. Department staff will explore multiple options for future Board consideration.
5. The Board took no action on a proposal to develop career specific courses/competencies for delivery within traditional core content areas for standard credits. Department staff will present this for future Board consideration.

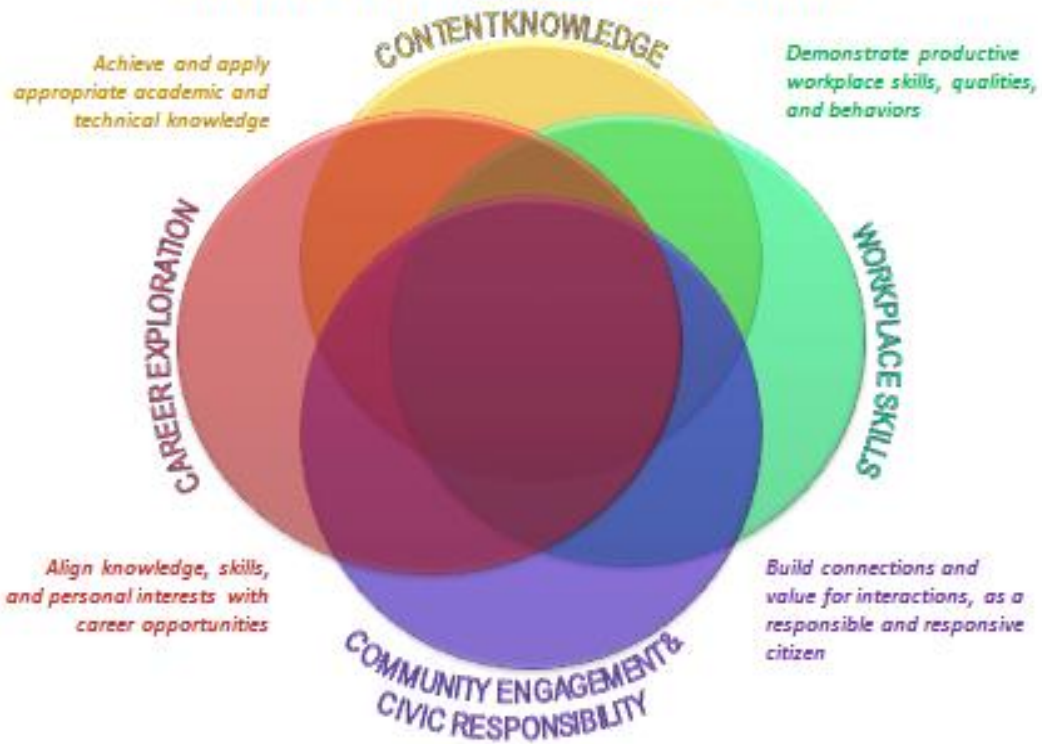
Public comments on the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate*, these proposals and pending considerations, have been elicited through various methods, including public hearings and community stakeholder roundtables, including students, held during the summer of 2016 in Williamsburg, Manassas, Abingdon and Lynchburg. In addition, public comments have been elicited through a VDOE website survey and received by written correspondence.

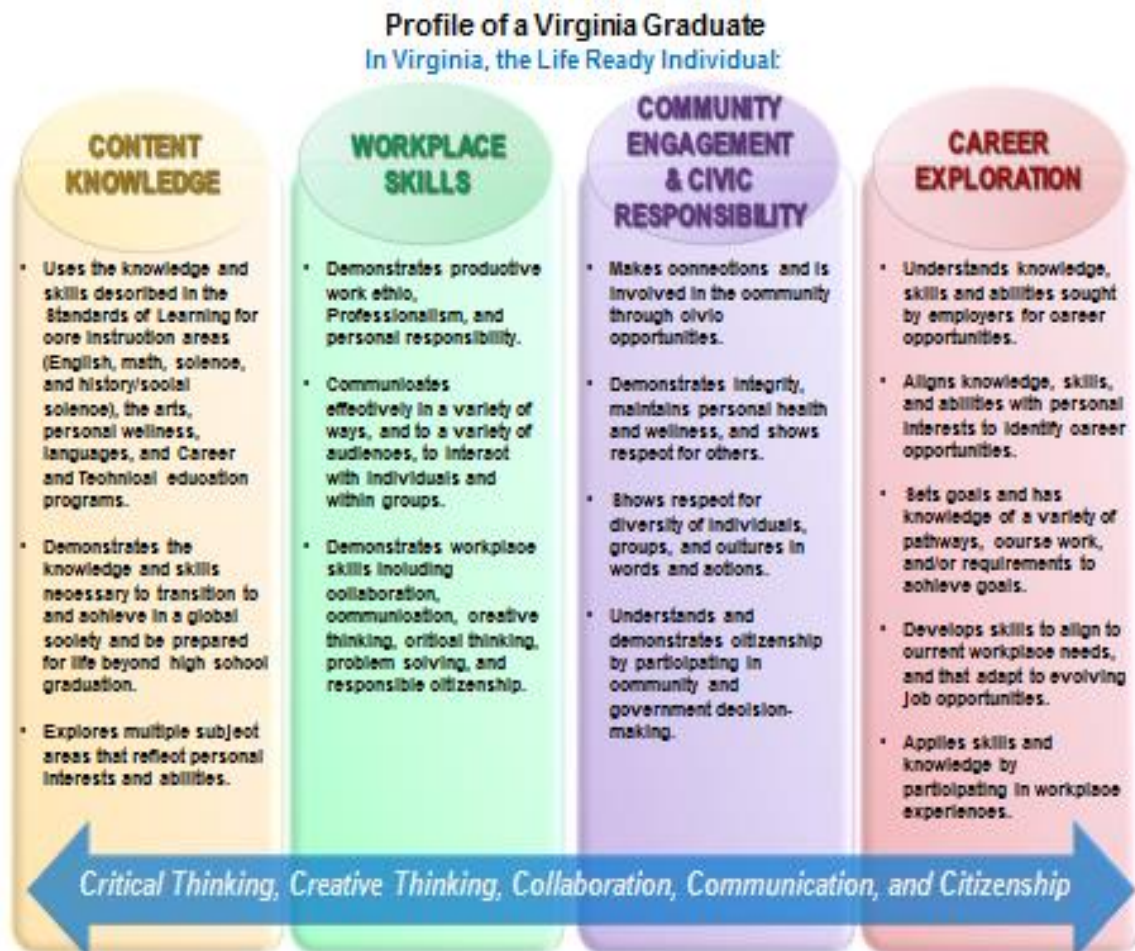
Virginia Department of Education staff presented a draft of the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) to the Board for consideration in September 2016 that included expectations associated with the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate*, as well as revised graduation requirements pertinent to the redesign of high school. See Appendix B. The Board is also currently considering and reviewing possible changes to its accountability and assessment systems to align with the Profile and the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) and considered specific proposed changes to the accountability system in November 2016.

Profile of a Virginia Graduate Framework

The Board of Education developed and continues to refine the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate*. The Profile displays the four domains that a student will experience in his or her K-12 educational experience to prepare him or her for life after high school – content knowledge, workplace skills, community engagement and civic responsibility, and career exploration. The domains are shown as overlapping circles to reflect the inter-connectedness of these areas to preparing students for life. Integrated across these four domains are the key skills of 21st century education: critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship.

Profile of a Virginia Graduate
In Virginia, the Life Ready Individual Will,
During His or Her K-12 Educational Experience:





Areas of Board Consensus

I. Increase Career Exposure, Exploration, and Planning

The Board accepted a proposal to enhance the Academic and Career Plan (ACP) requirement in the Standards of Accreditation to include more specific language related to career exposure, exploration, and planning, which would begin earlier in the school years. The Board is considering including content deliverables to students at critical decision-making stages in the K-12 school experience, and requiring that all students take a career investigation course in middle school.

Students would be provided information about jobs in career cluster area(s) in elementary school, explore potential career pathway designation(s) in middle school (according to the results of a locally selected career interest inventory as part of a required course), and plan a career-related experience for high school. In addition, the revised ACP, which would be

reviewed annually, would be student-led, family-engaged, and developed with the opportunity for revisions and edits as the student progresses through each level.

The overall goal is for students to begin an Academic and Career Plan Portfolio (ACPP) in elementary school to include information on interests, values, and skills necessary to make informed decisions regarding their future. Decisions supporting career exploration and planning and demonstration of competence or mastery would be documented and become a part of the portfolio, which would serve as a guide for the student through K-12. Demonstration items and information in the portfolio could include counselor notes related to academic and career goals, class projects, interest inventory results, and awards and recognitions. The information contained in the ACPP, K-6, would serve as the foundation for creating the ACP in grade 7.

II. Encourage Internships and Work-Based Learning Experiences for All Students

The Board accepted a proposal to encourage work-based learning experiences for all students. Work-based learning (WBL) is a coordinated, coherent sequence of on-the-job experiences that are related to students' career goals and interests, based on instructional preparation, and performed in partnership with local businesses, industries or other organizations in the community. Work-based learning enables students to apply classroom instruction in a real-world business or service-oriented work environment.

The Board of Education's encouragement of work-based learning experiences for all students would offer the following benefits to students:

- Interest in classroom work is stimulated by the application of academic and job-related learning to career clusters and pathways.
- The student has the opportunity to learn useful employment skills under actual workplace conditions.
- The ability of the student to develop a post-high-school plan for employment and/or continuing education is enhanced.

The Virginia Department of Education's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Office has created procedures and guidelines for WBL in Virginia. A task force that included business and industry training supervisors, special education teachers, parents, school counselors, instructional specialists and superintendents was convened to conduct a review through research, review, and analysis of national trends, a study of literature relevant to WBL, and an examination of the current status of WBL in Virginia's schools. The resulting *Career and Technical Education Work-Based Learning Guide* focuses on the seven types of WBL methods of instruction used in Virginia.

The WBL methods are divided into three categories: Career-exploration; Pre-professional development; and Career-preparation. These categories assist in linking WBL to

instructional activities, as well as the goals of each experience. Career-exploration experiences, such as job shadowing or mentorship, happen in middle or early high school and are intended to inform students about the range of career options and expose them to different workplace environments.

Extended internships and service learning are pre-professional activities which are related to high school course work and deepen a student's knowledge about careers of interest, and further develop personal qualities and workplace readiness skills. Career-preparation methods, such as student apprenticeships and cooperative education, encompass more long-term career-preparation experiences. They are structured to provide students with the opportunity to apply technical and practical knowledge and skills needed in the career that the student intends to pursue.

III. Emphasize the “5 Cs” – Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Collaboration, Communication and Citizenship

The Board accepted a proposal to add a new graduation requirement that students acquire and demonstrate foundational skills in critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship in accordance with the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate*.

By emphasizing the “5 Cs,” the Board's objective is to provide an educational foundation that ensures students are ready to be successful in a global economy, which includes changing and growing technology and social transformation. In addition to understanding the content and use of knowledge, graduates should be prepared with skills and attributes valued by employers, supportive of taking responsibility in one's community, inclusive of respect for self and others, and reflective of personal abilities and interests.

The Board received for first review proposed amendments to the Standards of Accreditation that emphasize and reference the 5 Cs in the regulation's purpose; philosophy, goals, and objectives; student achievement; and school instructional program sections. In addition, as the key skills of 21st century education, the 5 Cs are integrated across all four domains of the Profile.

IV. Expand the Use of Locally-Developed Performance Assessments and Reduce the Number of Verified Credits

The Board of Education accepted a proposal to: (1) expand the use of locally-developed performance assessments to verify history/social science credits, and (2) reduce the number of verified credits needed to earn a high school diploma to four. Under this proposal, a student would be required to earn one verified credit in each core subject area in order to graduate, as depicted below.

Discipline Area	Number of Verified Credits under Current Graduation Requirements:	Number of Verified Credits under Current Graduation Requirements:	Proposed Number of Verified Credits:	End-of-Course (EOC) SOL Tests that will be available to students	ESSA High School Assessment Requirements
	Standard Diploma	Advanced Studies Diploma	Both Diplomas		
English	2	2	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing 	1 Reading/Language Arts
Mathematics	1	2	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra I • Geometry • Algebra II 	1 Mathematics
Science	1	2	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earth Science • Biology • Chemistry 	1 Science
History/Social Science	1	2	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Geography • World History to 1500 • World History from 1500 to Present • VA and U.S. History 	
Student Selected Test	1	1	N/A		N/A

Notes:

- Under ESSA, students must be assessed annually in mathematics grades 3-8 and once in high school. To allow accelerated middle school students to meet this requirement using end-of-course mathematics tests, it will be necessary to continue the availability of the Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II SOL tests.
- The Board is considering allowing for local award of verified credit in English, mathematics, and laboratory science according to board guidelines when student does not pass SOL tests and meets board eligibility requirements.
- The Board is considering allowing for local award of verified credits according to board guidelines in history and social sciences when a student demonstrates mastery of content on locally developed authentic performance assessments.

Conclusion

The Board of Education is working in consultation with stakeholders to establish the policies, guidance, capacity, and professional development necessary to develop and implement a *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* that identifies the knowledge and skills that students should attain during high school in order to be successful adults and contributors to their workplaces, communities, and the global economy. Included in the Profile is consideration of the “5Cs” – critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship.

The Board’s *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* describes the preparation and competencies of the Virginia graduate, which encompasses the areas of content knowledge, workplace skills, community engagement and civic responsibility, and career exploration and provides flexibility for multiple pathways toward college and career readiness. Based on information provided from stakeholder participation, public comment, and staff research as directed by the Board, the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* will be finalized. Proposed amendments to the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, which would implement the Profile, were presented to the Board for first review in September 2016. Second review occurred in November 2016, with final approval by the Board anticipated for the first of the year 2017, when the proposed stage of the regulatory process will be initiated.

Implementation. To implement the *Profile* will require not only policy changes, but also changes in practice in schools. Developing instructional strategies, making curriculum changes, establishing career and work learning experiences, and evaluating students using authentic local performance assessments will take time. In redesigning the school experience, the Board notes that many of the reforms are dependent on additional resources and support including:

- Professional development and technical assistance for educators
- Career and technical education resources
- Counseling opportunities and student supports
- Sharing of best practices
- Flexibility, support and ability to take risks

The accomplishment of the application of the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* domains must be achieved on a continuum basis, with sufficient time and acknowledgement of differences in resources among school divisions, ongoing evaluation, and continual improvements.

Teachers and school leaders must be better supported to effectively deliver and serve all Virginia’s K-12 students. Effective teachers and school leaders are two of the fundamental factors impacting student learning and implementing the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate*. Given the urgent and wide-spread shortage of teachers and administrators in key areas, and

the critical importance of quality educators in preparing our students for a successful life after high school, the Board supports comprehensive reforms to address the following issues:

- Teacher, support staff, and school leader shortages
- Ongoing and high quality professional development
- Improvements in working conditions and compensation
- Capacity building of school divisions to support instructional personnel

Virginia's accountability system must provide tiered interventions aligned to need, encourage continuous improvement for all schools, and measure and report multiple indicators of school quality. Virginia's accountability system encompasses how schools are accredited, how schools needing improvement are supported, and how information about how schools are doing is communicated to the public. The Board is working towards comprehensive reforms across all areas of its accountability system so that it:

- Provides a comprehensive picture of school quality
- Drives continuous improvement for all schools
- Builds on strengths and addresses gaps in current system
- Provides differentiated incentives and interventions aligned to success or need
- Informs areas of technical assistance and school improvement resources

To paint a true picture of school quality, the Board is considering both academic outcomes such as achievement on assessments, graduation rates, school progress, and college and career readiness, and opportunities to learn, such as student attendance, access to resources, and parent and teacher engagement.

Greater attention and support must be provided to school communities with high poverty where achievement and opportunity gaps persist. Nearly 40 percent of Virginia public school students live in a household that meets the income eligibility guidelines for free or reduced-price school meals. With the growing number of economically disadvantaged students comes challenges to education, including attendance, access to materials, need for wrap-around services, and hunger.

In addition to these challenges, there are disparities among our schools and school divisions in terms of school infrastructure, access to advanced courses, disciplinary rates, and resources. Addressing conditions that affect student learning and well-being will require a continued investment of resources. Addressing these needs will also require partnerships among the Board of Education, the General Assembly, the Governor, local school boards and divisions, educators, families, community organizations, institutions of higher education, and business industries.