

**VLGMA Civic Engagement Committee Newsletter Article:  
Local Government Education Week  
January 2016**

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**April 2016 Local Government Education Week:  
Let's partner with K-12 students to learn what we are about!**

In 2012 the General Assembly adopted House Joint Resolution #93 proclaiming the first week of April as Local Government Education week in honor of the formation of the Council-Manager form of government in the City of Staunton, VA. The VLGMA Civic Engagement Committee has been developing tools to engage students, our future leaders, in order to acknowledge good community building work, educate on all local government services provided at the local level, and to increase student's awareness of career opportunities in local government. This will help us strengthen interest in local government management/public service as a viable career.

As part of this effort VLGMA asks each locality's governing body to adopt a proclamation honoring this week and a template is also provided on the Civic Engagement webpage on the VLGMA website [www.icma.org/vlgma](http://www.icma.org/vlgma). However, adopting a proclamation is not enough to really engage in a partnership with the local school district and the young people of our community. So we hope each locality will develop an engagement plan that meets your local need. To aid in this effort the Civic Engagement Committee has pulled together numerous resources that are also posted on the website that include a great elementary school level book, high school teachers' resource guide with lesson plans and a report of various civic engagement best practices used by VLGMA members. Activities are not restricted to the first week of April but can occur throughout the year and be highlighted in April. For example, Chesterfield County passed a resolution proclaiming the first week in April as Local Government Education Week (also on VLGMA website [www.icma.org/vlgma](http://www.icma.org/vlgma)). However, Chesterfield County encourages students to become active in local government through the Model County Government program. Model County Government is an educational experience for 12<sup>th</sup> grade government students at Chesterfield County high schools provided by a partnership of Youth Planning and Development, Chesterfield Public Schools and Cooperative Extension. Through conversations, observations and actual experiences, our students develop an appreciation for and a better understanding of local government. The students attend a Board of Supervisor meeting, School Board Public Engagement session and each student shadows a county or school leader. While this initiative has typically been held in the fall, most recently the event was during budget season to provide maximum exposure to that process. For additional information on Model County Government please contact Jana Carter, Director of Youth Services at (804) 796-7100 or Sarah Snead, Deputy County Administrator of Human Services at (804) 748-1212.

Local activities can include:

1. Provide for all school and public libraries the elementary school level books, Out and About City Hall and Kid's Guide to Local Government, which are available at: <http://www.capstonepub.com>. These are great illustrated resources that describes what services a locality provides and is affordable at about \$20 each in hard cover (paper back also available);
2. Conduct guest readings of the books to elementary classes;
3. Participate in VML's "If I were Mayor" essay contest;
4. Conduct 7<sup>th</sup> grade website scavenger hunt to learn about public services;
5. Develop a high school service learning program;
6. Conduct mock Governing Body meetings;
7. Share the Teacher's Resource Guide, including sample lesson plans designed for upper middle/high school students, to be used as part of the curriculum for meeting civics/social studies standards of learning; and/or
8. Be a guest speaker to middle or high school students regarding your career as a City or Deputy Manager and/or discuss community projects (e.g., annual budget, redevelopment effort or capital infrastructure improvements) that the students will see occurring or read in the news.

Check out this website link [www.icma.org/vlgma](http://www.icma.org/vlgma) for additional great resources and feel free to contact us with questions and/or to share additional ideas.

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