

**VLGMA Civic Engagement Committee Newsletter Article:
2016 Local Government Education Week- How Did We Do?
April 2016**

Prepared by Cindy Mester, Civic Engagement Committee Chair

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 has been promoting 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 and service opportunities in local government.

As part of this effort VLGMA asked each locality's governing body to adopt a proclamation honoring this week as well as develop engagement plans to get schools and students involved. We had a great response this year of adopting proclamations....13% increase over 2015!! This only represents the localities I am aware of so am sure this doesn't capture everyone. Even more exciting is the breath of great activities the were undertaken during the first week of April as well as year round. Stay tune for highlights in upcoming eNews articles.

The Civic Engagement Committee thanks VLGMA, VML, VACo and the Clerk's Association for spreading the word through emails and magazine articles.

As a reminder below are ideas to further develop your year round program:

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 7th 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 for additional great resources and feel free to contact us with questions and/or to share additional ideas.

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