



**For Immediate Release
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ALL SIX SALEM SCHOOLS EARN PRESTIGIOUS STATEWIDE RECOGNITION

*TWO SCHOOLS GARNER HIGHEST
POSSIBLE HONOR FROM GOV. KAINE*

Every school in the Salem School Division received a highly regarded pat on the back today as Gov. Tim Kaine and the Virginia Board of Education honored the “best of the best” amongst Virginia’s public schools.

Andrew Lewis Middle School and East Salem Elementary are two of just 162 Virginia public schools to earn the Governor’s Award for Educational Excellence. This prestigious award is the highest honor given in the Board of Education’s relatively new incentive program for schools and school divisions known as the VIP – Virginia Index for Performance.

To qualify for this honor the state says a school must - “Meet all state and federal achievement benchmarks for at least two consecutive years and meet Governor Kaine’s goals for achievement in elementary reading; enrollment in Algebra I by grade 8; enrollment in college-level courses; attainment of advanced diplomas and career and industry certifications...”

Salem’s four other schools – Salem High, G.W. Carver Elementary, South Salem Elementary and West Salem Elementary earned the Board of Education’s VIP Excellence award. Only 24 school divisions and 544 schools across the Commonwealth reached this level of achievement.

“We are thankful that Governor Kaine and the Board of Education are seeking to recognize schools for more than just test scores,” says Salem Superintendent Alan Seibert. “In Salem, we recognize that the SOLs represent the minimum of our commitment to excellence, so we are gratified that our students, teachers, and all who serve the children of Salem have earned this recognition.”

Seibert credits Salem’s “Children First” way of doing business with making the awards possible. The high level of support and cooperation that exists within the School Board, the City Administration, City Council and the citizens of Salem make it possible to provide for “*Every Child – Every Day.*”

“This is just another strong indication of how important talented, dedicated teachers and support staff members are to maintaining this level of excellence,” he says. “Hopefully, the General Assembly will take note of these outstanding achievements in the coming weeks as legislators continue to consider ways to balance the budget and reduce funding for education.”

Andrew Lewis is Salem’s sole middle school with 955 students in grades 6 through 8. Principal Jerry Campbell credits the diligent efforts of his staff for helping earn the honor from the Governor.

“This is honestly a tribute to our teachers and support staff,” says Campbell. “They work tirelessly and enthusiastically each day to provide the best possible education for our students and I’m very proud of them.”

East Salem Elementary principal Diane Rose responded to the news that her school had received the Governor’s Award by deflecting all the credit to her staff.

“This is wonderful for East Salem and proof that it really does take a village to raise a child,” she says. “The classroom teachers are the ones who make things like this happen, but it truly takes everyone from the custodians, to cafeteria workers to support staff members working for the betterment of the students to win this type of award.”

The Salem School Division, as a whole, also earned the state’s VIP Excellence Award for the second straight year.

“It is tremendous news for the division, and I think it just shows that Salem has high achieving students and very dedicated teachers,” says Joe Coleman, Salem’s Director of Assessment and Technology.

Additional Information can be found on the Governor’s website at www.governor.virginia.gov or on the Virginia Department of Education site at www.doe.virginia.gov

SALEM SCHOOL DIVISION VIP AWARDS:

Governor’s Award for Educational Excellence:

**Andrew Lewis Middle School
East Salem Elementary School**

VIP Excellence Award:

Salem City Schools, G.W. Carver Elem., South Salem Elem., West Salem Elem., Salem High School

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