

Prospective Senate Pages: Understanding Professional Development

The following information addresses may assist you with completing an application for the Senate Page Program.

The Virginia General Assembly is a bicameral legislature. The House Page Program, administered by the House Clerk's Office, is a separate program that requires completion of a different application. In addition, the selection process, program components and protocols for the House Page Program differ from the Senate.

Understanding the Professional Development Component

Each Senate Page will be expected to fully participate with reading, journal writing/critical thinking, team building, guest speakers and group discussion assignments through the program's professional development track. In addition, the track also includes field trips to historical sites and other educational venues. The track changes on a yearly basis and is designed to engage students from various public, private and home school environments. Each Senate Page will maintain a binder in which written assignments, team building simulations and notes from required readings and discussions will be kept.

The professional development track is organized similar to a college course syllabus. Content varies year to year. A copy is issued prior to the start of session to allow for maximum planning and time management throughout the program. Excluding field trips, night events and other learning opportunities through work assignments, the track equals **approximately 4 ½ to 6 hours of classroom-like activity per week** for a Senate Page. Each component of the professional development track is purposely designed with a young professional in mind.

Required Reading: Each Senate Page must read the Constitution of Virginia. Typically, the required reading is divided up in two Articles per week. The class will participate in 30-minute team breakouts each Monday afternoon to discuss what they learned from the assigned reading. Note taking is required.

Journal Writing/Critical Thinking: The professional development track includes legislative words of the day, words of the week and a few critical thinking timed writings.

- *Word of the Day:* Prior to the start of morning procedure, the class will receive a legislative word and a definition.
- *Words of the Week:* Prior to the start of morning procedure each Monday morning, the class will receive three words of the week. For example: Helpful, generous and proactive. By the end of the week, each page should have written down an example of where he or she observed those words in their day-to-day responsibilities.
- In class timed writing followed by discussion. *My Page in History: How do you want to be remembered as a Virginia Senate Page? 1 page in length.*

Assignments such as these are kept in a required spiral-bound notebook.

Team Building: Each page class is divided into three or four teams for the duration of session. A team building exercise may be 30 minutes long or two hours. Sample exercises include the following:

- *21st Century High School: Design and build a 21st century high school complete with a budget, building design and curriculum.*
- *Virginia Tourism Project: Identify a theme for your campaign to engage possible tourists to visit our beautiful beaches, lovely mountains and major cities.*

Program Partners: The class will hear from bankers, lobbyists, elected officials, college and university representatives, attorneys, alumni of the program and other professionals who will speak about topics relevant to future young professionals. Note taking is encouraged.

Group Discussion: Time permitting, the class will engage in group discussions with their team leaders or a member of the Senate staff about daily headlines, current events, guest speakers or debate that occurred during a floor session.

Participants in the Senate Page Program are urged to discuss the professional development track with their instructors, as many of those assignments may serve as a suitable substitute for homework or other class assignments a student is missing at school. Refer to the working with your school tip sheet, and be sure to include this in the discussion.

A sample excerpt is available on the last page of this document. The agenda is modeled after a college syllabus, so each participant has a list of all planned structured activities for the session before arriving for orientation. The content changes yearly based on the length of session and guest availability.

For more information, please contact

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

SAMPLE WEEK

Week 3

Week 3 Words: Flexible, Responsible and Hospitable: In your blue spiral notebook, write down these three words. By Friday morning, you need to write down an example of where you observed each of the three words in your day-to-day.

Date	Type of Program	Topic/Objective	Due at Roll Call (Unless Otherwise Noted)
Monday, January 15	Weekly Team Breakout Session Class	Weekly Team Breakout Session Topic: Article VII (<i>Local Government</i>) and Article VIII (<i>Education</i>) of the Virginia Constitution -Introduction to local government structure in Virginia (3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.) My Local Government" exercise*: Identify (1) the mayor of your hometown/city, (2) the members of your Town/City Council, (3) the members of your County Board of Supervisors. <i>Write this information in your spiral notebook. * you will need your tablet or p.c. with word processing software.</i>	-See Appendix I in your Quick Reference and Professional Development Guide Handbook to review this week's "Weekly Quick Facts you Should Know" (Week 3) Monday night, read the assigned article in your quick reference guide.
Tuesday, January 16	Guest	City councilman (4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.)	-Headline of the Day
Wednesday, January 17	Guest	County administrator (4:00 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.)	N/A
Thursday, January 18	Guest	Vice-mayor of a city (4:00 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.)	-Headline of the Day -Weekly thank you cards (by 5:00 p.m.)
Friday, January 19	Noon Dismissal	Have a great weekend!	-2 Sentences to add to the Senate Page Resolution - <u>Weekly Reflection #3</u> : Reflect on what you have experienced this week. What is a topic that has stuck out to you? How does it apply to you? <i>You must incorporate the Week 3 Words. Length: at least 1 paragraph (8 sentences, minimum)</i>

What do I need to do this weekend? What is due next Monday and Tuesday morning during roll call?

Monday, January 22:

- 1.) See Appendix I in your Quick Reference and Professional Development Guide to review next week's "Weekly Quick Facts You Should Know" (Week 4)
- 2.) Have your week #4 words written down in your spiral notebook
- 3.) Read and be prepared to discuss Article IX (Corporations) and Article X (Taxation and Finance) of the Virginia Constitution