

NEWS RELEASE

West Virginia Virtual Academy, Pierpont Community and Technical College Collaborate to Offer Dual Credit Classes for Students

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FAIRMONT, W.Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- A new collaboration between West Virginia Virtual Academy (WVVA) and Pierpont Community and Technical College (Pierpont) will allow WVVA students to take dual credit classes through Pierpont and potentially earn an associate degree/earn credit toward an associate degree by the time they graduate high school.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing between WVVA and Pierpont announcing the partnership will take place **Tuesday, May 30 at 1 p.m.** at Pierpont's campus located at 500 Galliher Dr, Fairmont, WV 26554. Members of the press are invited to attend the event.

West Virginia Virtual Academy distinguishes themselves from other schools due to their focus on Career Readiness. Beginning in 6th grade, students at WVVA are provided career exploration courses; as they transition into high school, students are further provided pathways that lead to earning industry recognized credentials. As a career-ready focused school, WVVA's hope is to graduate students with real world credentials. Through this partnership, in addition to the credits they receive, students will have the opportunity to benefit from being instructed by a PCTC instructor, according to WVVA Executive Director Doug Cipoletti.

While attending a recent School Choice Fair hosted by the Cardinal Institute, Dr. Joni M. Gray, transitional educational specialist at Pierpont, connected with representatives from WVVA, and Cipoletti and Gray learned they eagerly shared the same vision for students in West Virginia: to have the opportunity to earn an associate degree while completing high school requirements. "(Joni's) vision through Pierpont and willingness to work with a new virtual school is world-class," Cipoletti said.

“Community colleges in West Virginia, in my opinion, are extremely underutilized,” Cipoletti said. “The programs they offer are fantastic and provide certifications and credentials that allow graduates to gain employment right out of school. Providing this type of opportunity to high school students will give them a leg up and the opportunity to be successful from a younger age. And, because the legislature has provided monies for these courses, many students will be able to earn credits and credentials at little to no cost to them,” he continued.

Gray said the partnership between WVVA and Pierpont embodies what she calls ‘learning forward.’ “Working together, we are providing learning opportunities that are innovative, nimble and responsive to the unique needs of West Virginia students and families, and the generational influence this partnership has will be transformative,” Gray said. “This partnership reflects the mission of Pierpont, and as such, underscores our commitment of service to the students and families of West Virginia.”

About West Virginia Virtual Academy

West Virginia Virtual Academy (WVVA) is a full-time, tuition-free public school for grades K-11. WVVA provides an online learning program for students statewide, giving families the choice to access the curriculum provided by K12, a Stride, Inc. company. For more information about WVVA, visit <https://wvva.k12.com/>.

About Pierpont Community and Technical College

Pierpont is a public community college in Fairmont, West Virginia. Founded in 1974, it has the second largest enrollment of the community and technical colleges that make up the West Virginia Community and Technical College System. The mission of Pierpont Community and Technical College is to provide accessible, responsive, comprehensive education that works. Pierpont For more information, visit <https://www.pierpont.edu/>.

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