When Austin was very young, his mother, Vicki, helped him develop an understanding of career by explaining why she went to work each day and what she did while she was there. Austin’s father, Gary, says his son exhibited an entrepreneurial spirit that was fueled by exploring a variety of interests. “I encouraged his exploration and tried not to put too much pressure on him to stay in one area.”

Austin’s career interests changed frequently; indeed, the more he explored, the more excited he became about learning. When it came time for him to develop a plan, his parents felt comfortable in letting Austin make it for himself.

If you are a parent, be an active partner in your child’s education.

Patricia I. Wright, Virginia’s Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Vicki encourages parents to “ask questions about your child’s plans and interests and . . . listen to his/her answers.” Gary advises, “stay tuned in to the opportunities that are available for your opportunities that are available for your child today.”

College and Career Readiness

- Nearly 8 in 10 job openings in the next decade in the U.S. will require education or training after high school.
- A college-ready student is prepared for further education or training, including study at two- and four-year institutions leading to a certificate, license, or Associates or Bachelor’s degree.
- A career-ready student is a high school graduate who has the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in further education, such as a technical program, community college, an apprenticeship, or on-the-job training.
16 Career Clusters...

An organizing tool to help students investigate careers and plan their courses of study.

1. Agriculture & Natural Resources
2. Architecture & Construction
3. Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications
4. Business Management & Administration
5. Education & Training
6. Finance
7. Government & Public Administration
8. Health Science
9. Hospitality & Tourism
10. Human Services
11. Information Technology
12. Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security
13. Manufacturing
14. Marketing
15. Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
16. Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

How can parents help?

- **Have your child answer the following questions:**
  - What are your favorite school subjects? Answer:
  - What school activities do you enjoy most? Answer:
  - What hobbies and interests are most valuable to you? Answer:
  - What achievements make you most proud? Answer:
  - What careers most interest you? Answer:

- **Guide your child through the following:**
  - **STEP 1:** Take a career interest assessment in middle school.
  - **STEP 2:** Identify interest in one or more career clusters.
  - **STEP 3:** Relate school subjects to career interests.
  - **STEP 4:** Understand how middle school subjects relate to jobs and careers.
  - **STEP 5:** Create an academic and career plan in middle school.

Parents have the greatest influence on students’ career development, ahead of teachers and counselors.