Future-Proof with Durable Skills

WRS & CTECS @ VACTEA

DATE: THURSDAY, 10/16

TIME: 9:45AM-10:30AM

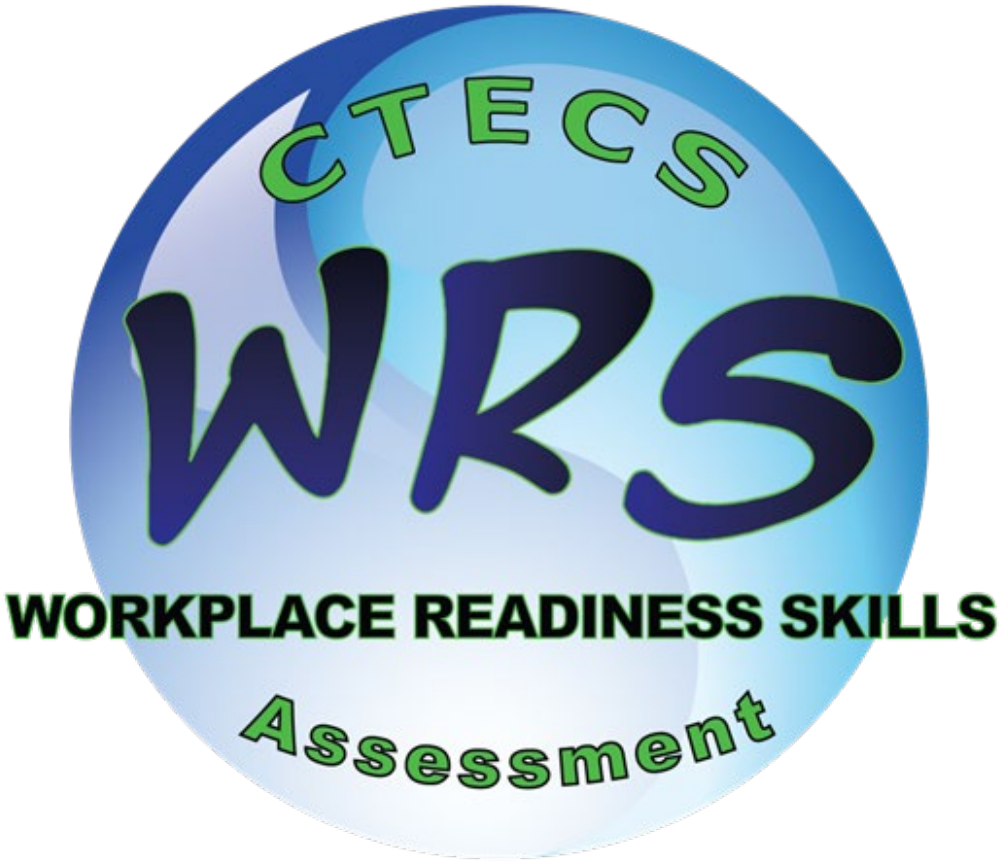
LOCATION/ROOM: APPALACHIAN C (LARGE ROOM)

Who is CTECS?

We manage the **Workplace Readiness Skills Assessment** in multiple states.

Consortium of states dedicated to CTE program improvement.

Since **1973**, to provide industry-based resources and services for the improvement of career technical education and **workforce development instruction, assessment, certification, and delivery**.



Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) Credential

YOU GET THEM TECHNICALLY READY, AND THE WRS WILL HELP GET THEM WORKPLACE READY.

CAN CONSISTENCY DEVALUE?

- ❑ FLEXIBLE—SERVE MORE STUDENTS
- ❑ PROGRESSIVE—EXPAND OFFERINGS
- ❑ INEXPENSIVE—REIMBURSEMENT & PRICE PER TEST HAS NOT CHANGED

The WRS List

Personal Skills and Mindsets (e.g., Integrity, Work Ethic)

People Skills and Communication (e.g., Conflict Resolution, Teamwork)

Professional Skills (e.g., Continuous Learning and Adaptability, Efficiency and Productivity)

Future Proof: WRS as a Durable Skills Complement

- Durable skills are Workplace Readiness Skills.
- Durable skills are long-lasting, transferable abilities—like communication, critical thinking, and collaboration—that remain valuable across industries, roles, and technological changes.
- A way of educating when training for careers that do not yet exist.
- Virginia requires every CTE program to embed these skills and emphasize them, since 2011.
- Assessment cost reimbursed at the state level.
- Educational leadership emphasizes the teaching of these skills for good reason: Employers demand them.

Pivotal Time

Durable skills — are essential for long-term success, especially as technical skills evolve.

CTE programs are increasingly seen as the strategic bridge between academic learning and workforce readiness.

“Seven of the ten most-requested skills in job postings are durable skills.”
— America Succeeds, analysis of 80 million job postings.

“Soft skills like communication, leadership, and emotional intelligence are essential for success.”
— U.S. News & World Report

Why it matters. More than checking a box…

Assessment matters, it’s meaningful, and it’s measurable.

Some important industries are moving away from 4-year degree requirements.

Industry keeps telling us that they can train the technical skills. What they need are people who will exhibit grit, determination, and adaptability. To be coachable, mature and professional are key qualities they look for now.

The WRS Industry Meeting

April 2025

CTECS
Career and Technical Education Consortium of States

Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) Meeting

While CTE students might be trained to be technically-ready to perform their jobs, they often need extra assistance and guidance to be professionally-ready for any workplace. To set them apart, students need training in the personal, people, and professional skills required to become successful employees. The WRS package from CTECS ensures that students are aware of and prepared for the many practical, daily challenges of the world of work.

Problem Solving ◊ Initiative ◊ Work Ethic
Conflict Resolution ◊ Teamwork ◊ Customer Service
Continuous Learning ◊ Career & Life Management

Purpose

Increase positive visibility and influence from industry

Date & Location

April 28, 2025: 1-5 p.m. followed by off-site dinner

Who We Need

Professionals who know, value, and apply standards of personal

Initiatives

Springboarding from the Atlanta WRS Industry meeting in April, support from these companies and institutions creates brand identity and value, helping us all achieve a scalable workforce.

- Micron and NOVA
- Micro-Nano Technology Center:
  - Pasadena City College
  - Semi-Foundation
- BMW—Young Scholars
- Siemens—Super Technicians
- Decide Dekalb: Georgia Piedmont Technical College (Pepsi, Sugar Bowl Bakery, General Mills, others)
- Southern Crescent Technical College
- Dominion Energy
- MWI Workforce Institute Registered Apprenticeship Program Sponsor

Scaling

PREPARING A GIANT WORKFORCE

IN A VERY SHORT TIME

Historic

The first time a company has hosted part of a CTECS COP

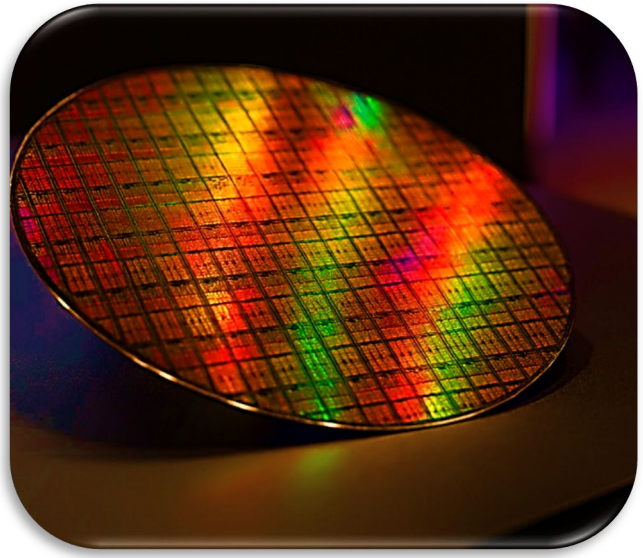
Micron is the **only major memory manufacturer headquartered in the U.S.**

Expanding domestic production with a **$15 billion fab in Idaho** and a **$100 billion investment plan in New York**, supported by the CHIPS Act.

Plant in **Manassas** is being upgraded by major investment.

Micron is investing heavily in **High-Bandwidth Memory (HBM)** and **GDDR6X**, critical for GPUs and AI accelerators.

Market capitalization is **$208 billion**, similar to Pepsi.



New for 2025

1. Additional time (+30 min., total 90 min.) also added to tests with accommodations.
2. Use of a Print-Based, Word-to-Word Bilingual Dictionary
    - Only identified EL students can use
    - Must not contain definitions, meanings, or examples of any words or phrases
    - Must be a paper dictionary
    - Individually offered to each identified EL to have this accommodation for testing, not shared among test takers.
    - Must be school-provided, not student-owned.
    - Must not be altered with handwritten notes in the margins nor include additional materials, such as class notes.
    - Should be familiar to the EL

Other Testing Reminders

- Summer testing ends **July 31, 2026.**
- Per Student: 1 Pre-Test and up to 3 Post-Tests (until they pass)
- Cost: $7 Pre-Test / $10 Post-Test, reimbursable, cost-effective
- Tests: 100 multi-choice questions, improved every year, online only, proctored locally
- Performance has been improving since the end of the pandemic.

After the test:

- Reports, Retakes, Policies (accommodations)
- Data Verification

Accommodations

- Student registration includes designations for students with a disability (SWD) & limited English proficiency or English Learner (EL).
- Extended time provided: 3 hours total.
- Audio option for listening to each or select questions and answers.
- A live reader may be assigned (one to each individual).
- Text enlargement available.

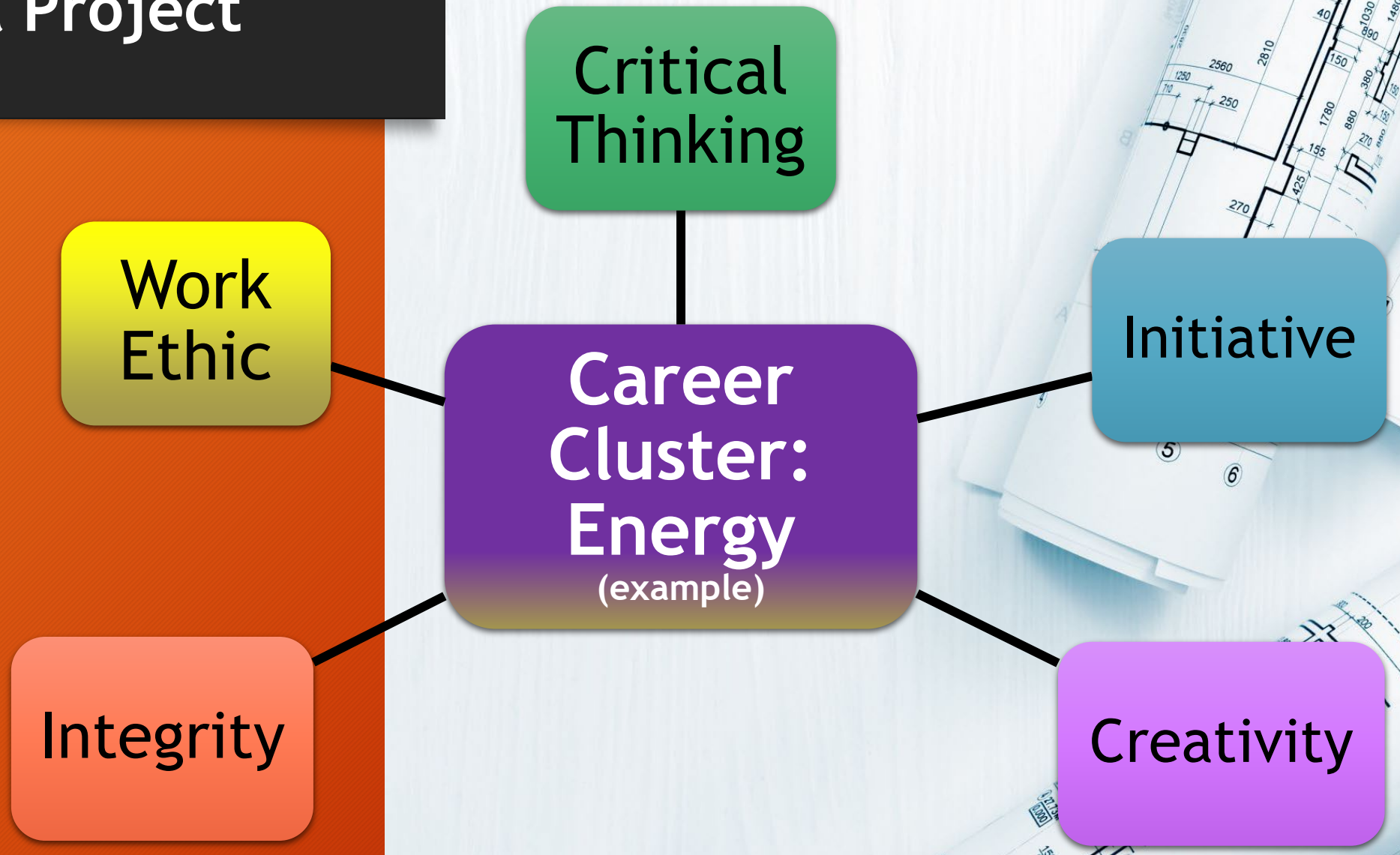
Reminders

- Submit the Purchaser's Agreement (each year).
- Submit the Test Site Administrator Agreement (each year).
- Register students.
- Go to inactive orgs to see previous years' data.
- File reimbursement by deadlines.
- Full curriculum is available + middle school transition.
- Emphasize our WRS Digital Badge to increase claim and share rates.

Easy to Implement and Meaningful

- Online curriculum & test prep
- Level 1: Career Interest Development (Grades 8-9)
- Level 2: WRS (Grades 10-12)
- Cartridge upload option (Canvas)

Virginia Project



Returning to the Gold Standard

- The WRS Badge is offered by passing the WRS Assessment.
- Track into postsecondary data. Discover how the WRS badge is meaningful to employers.
- Students use Credly to showcase their experiences, credentials, and skills, organize their future goals and plans, and share with meaningful career opportunities.

Credly