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## Education Expert VCU professor reappointed to Virginia Board of Education

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**Capital News Service -- Mark E. Emblidge**, director of the Literacy Institute at [Virginia Commonwealth University](#), was reappointed last week to the **Virginia Board of Education** – and then promptly elected as the board's president.

On Thursday, **Gov. Timothy M. Kaine** reappointed Emblidge to the State Board of Education. "Mark is recognized as expert in the field of education and a pioneer in literacy studies," Kaine said.

Later that day, the nine-member board unanimously elected Emblidge as its president.

Emblidge is the founding director of the Virginia Literacy Foundation and Communities in Schools of Virginia, a non-profit, stay-in-school program. He also served four terms on the Richmond School Board, chairing the board while Kaine was mayor of Richmond. Emblidge campaigned with Kaine during his run for governor last fall.

Emblidge is an affiliate professor in VCU's School of Education. His research focuses on at-risk children, high school reform and adult and family literacy. He is managing a federally funded \$3.7 million Early Reading First Grant.

In February 2002, then-Gov. Mark Warner appointed Emblidge to the Virginia Board of Education. The panel oversees the Commonwealth's 1,900 public schools, which enrolled 1.2 million students last year.

Kaine said he wants Emblidge to continue serving on the board.

"His experience and passion for teaching will be invaluable as we move toward excellence in our K-12 system, and as we work to expand pre-kindergarten opportunities to more of Virginia's children," the governor said.

Emblidge, who received his doctorate and master's degree in education from the University of Virginia, is a pioneer in literacy efforts. In 1995, President Clinton appointed him to the board of the National Institute for Literacy. He chaired that board from 1998 until 2002.

Since 2004, Emblidge has represented Virginia on the Southern Regional Education Board.

After being elected by his colleagues to serve as president of the Virginia Board of Education, Emblidge said he wants to build on the success of Virginia's Standards of Learning program. The SOLs tests students' knowledge in English, math and other subjects; the results determine whether schools get accredited.

"There is a lot to be thankful for, but we still have a long way to go," Emblidge said. "The fact that we have 92 percent of our schools fully accredited is wonderful, but there are still students who are not passing the tests. We also want to take a look at those students who have no difficulty passing the SOL tests and figure out how we can continually challenge them, so that when they graduate they can compete with anyone in the world."

Kaine has made education a priority. He focused on expanding the pre-kindergarten system in his State of the Commonwealth address in January.

"We know that most of a child's brain develops before the age of 5. But nearly all of the money we now spend on education is spent after that point," Kaine told lawmakers. "Research demonstrates that children with access to pre-kindergarten have greater success in school, and throughout life."

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