

Engaging Local Schools



God is using SBC of Virginia churches to minister to schools throughout Virginia.

For years, SBCV has engaged local schools through its Christmas backpack mission project. SBCV churches generously provided over 1,700 backpacks in 2022, which were used by SBCV church plants for outreach and by SBCV churches in low-income areas. Children who may typically receive very little for Christmas have been blessed by these gifts of love.

Before- and after-school clubs are another way churches are serving local schools. In club settings, students are given a place to belong and hear the Gospel. This past summer, SBCV's Student Fusion and Family Fusion teams engaged a local school by clearing and building an emergency exit route and assisting with other projects.

When Pastor Matt Beagle began as the senior pastor at **Pinecrest Baptist Church** in Portsmouth, he came with eyes wide open for opportunities to serve the community. With a background in local law enforcement, Pastor Beagle knew the importance of churches in the community, and he had seen firsthand Portsmouth's need for Gospel saturation.

Pinecrest Baptist had already been ministering to a local school following the tragic shooting death of a young athlete who had left the school campus for a bite to eat before a game. Pinecrest began providing meals for the athletes so they could eat with them and build a bridge for Gospel ministry.

Pinecrest saw needs within the community and provided answers, which opened doors for Gospel ministry.

Consider serving your church and reaching your community and local schools by:

- Providing breakfast for the school staff
- Helping with groundskeeping and flower beds
- Feeding a sports team before its games
- Collecting school supplies
- Having men volunteer to spend time with kids whose dads cannot be present
- Mobilizing your members as reading mentors
- Going above and beyond on Teacher Appreciation Week
- Praying regularly for a school's teachers and leaders by name
- Paying for lunch from a food truck for the staff on workdays
- Asking them what they need

Jesus commanded his disciples, "Let the little children come to me" (Matthew 19:14). Jesus doesn't want us just to tolerate children when they show up but to actively pursue opportunities to minister to them and share the Gospel with them.

God has strategically positioned your church to minister to your community's elementary, middle, and high school students. Let's go and make Jesus known to every generation. ■