



# News Release

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**Media Contact:**

Holly Walker  
Public Relations Manager  
804-594-1530  
[hwalker@jtcc.edu](mailto:hwalker@jtcc.edu)

## **Tracey Gilchrist Joins John Tyler Community College Board**

CHESTER and MIDLOTHIAN, Va. – Tracey Gilchrist’s love for education began when she was a child. She liked to “play school;” enjoyed writing and learning; and found inspiration in her teachers, who pushed her to always strive for excellence. As she grew up, Gilchrist’s view of education also was influenced by family. “My mother had high expectations for her children and emphasized the importance of education,” Gilchrist says. “To this day, she reminds me that no one can take away your knowledge and experience.”

Gilchrist took those lessons to heart and decided to turn her passion for education into a career, which includes working with elementary, middle, high school and college students in roles ranging from admissions to counseling to district administrator. She is currently an elementary school counselor for Surry County Public Schools. “I am truly a student advocate at heart,” says Gilchrist. “Over the years, I have seen an expansion in opportunities for students. Simultaneously, I have seen more social challenges

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facing students that have the potential to challenge their emotional and mental health (bullying, school and community violence, etc.).”

Among the opportunities she sees for students are Virginia’s community colleges. “Through colleges like John Tyler, many in our community have an opportunity to expand their skills and seek an advanced degree at an affordable price,” she says. Gilchrist also points to other community college attributes, including giving high school students the opportunity to jump-start their college educations; supporting workforce development; providing supportive environments that help students build confidence in their abilities; and offering programs and activities that enhance cultural richness within communities. “All of these factors make colleges like John Tyler beacons of light within the community,” says Gilchrist.

Gilchrist, who represents Surry County on the John Tyler Community College Board, holds a Masters of Education in Guidance and Counseling from Virginia State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from The College of William and Mary. She has been married for 25 years and has three children.

John Tyler Community College offers more than 60 majors that provide pathways to careers in high-demand fields; transfer opportunities to four-year colleges and universities; and industry credentials and licensures. The college, with campuses in Chester and Midlothian, a Nursing Education Center, online classes, and off-campus classrooms, served more than 14,329 students during the 2017-18 academic year. It also assisted more than 7,000 learners through its workforce development division, Community College Workforce Alliance.

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