VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Planning Grant Application
for a College Partnership Laboratory School

A.   GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Name and Address of Eligible Entity (Planning Grant Applicant):** Norfolk State University, 700 Park Avenue, Norfolk, VA 23504

2. **Authorized Official Representative:** Dr. DoVeanna Fulton

3. **Name of Contact Person for Application:** Dr. Denelle Wallace-Alexander and Dr. Cynthia S. Nicholson

4. **Telephone:** 757-561-3012

5. **Email:** dlwallace@nsu.edu

6. **Office Telephone Number:** 757-823-8590

7. **Date of Submission:** January 26, 2023

8. **Amount of Funding Requested ($200,000 maximum):** $200,000

9. Public institutions of higher education (IHE); public higher education centers, institutes, or authorities; or eligible institutions of higher education as defined in the Tuition Assistance Grant Program, as provided in § 23.1-628, (eligible entity or entities) may apply for a Virginia Board of Education (Board) College Partnership Laboratory School Planning Grant (Planning Grant).

10. Each Planning Grant Applicant (applicant) seeking a Planning Grant must read and comply with the Instructions for Application for a Planning Grant for a College Partnership Laboratory School (Lab School), which are available on the Virginia

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Department of Education's (Department) website, and fully complete this Planning Grant Application (application) to be eligible for a Planning Grant.

11. Applications may be submitted and will be evaluated for Planning Grant awards based on factors set forth herein, on a rolling basis.

12. Planning Grant Term: This application is for a one-time Planning Grant, the term for which will not exceed 12 months from the date of any award hereunder.

13. The completed PDF version of the application and related materials must be sent to labschools@doe.virginia.gov by email. The Department may return or reject proposals that are incomplete.

14. Please contact labschools@doe.virginia.gov by email if there are any questions about the application process.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. **College Partnership Laboratory School:** In accordance with Item 4-14 of the General Assembly's 2022-2024 Biennium budget, the Code of Virginia § 22.1-349.1 is amended and reenacted, and the types of IHE eligible entities to establish Lab Schools are defined as follows:

   a. "College Partnership Laboratory School" means a public, nonsectarian, nonreligious school in the Commonwealth established by a public institution of higher education; public higher education center, institute, or authority; or an eligible institution, as defined in § 23.1-628. Notwithstanding the provisions of § 22.1-349.5, a public institution of higher education; a public higher education center, institute, or authority; or an eligible institution, as defined in § 23.1-628 may submit an application for formation of a college partnership laboratory school."

   b. An "eligible institution" as provided above is an institution of higher education as defined in the Tuition Assistance Grant Program in accordance with § 23.1-628.

2. **At-risk student:** As provided in the Code of Virginia § 22.1-349.1, "at-risk student" means a student having a physical, emotional, intellectual, socioeconomic, or cultural risk factor, as defined in Board criteria, that research indicates may negatively influence educational success.

   For the purpose of these guidelines and any Planning Grant awards, "at-risk students" include (a) students who have experienced learning loss as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic; (b) students served by low-performing schools that are designated as "accredited with conditions" or "accreditation denied" based on the Virginia Board of Education's accreditation ratings; and (c) students attending schools identified under the Every Student Succeeds Act within three support categories: (i) Comprehensive Support and Improvement, (ii) Targeted Support and Improvement, or (iii) Additional Targeted Support Category.

3. **Regional diversity:** For the purpose of evaluation of this application, regional diversity reflects representation from each of the Department's eight Superintendent regions.

C. ASSURANCES AND SIGNATURES

1. **ASSURANCES**
   a. By signing and submitting this application, the applicant assures that it will adhere to state and federal laws and regulations governing public schools, including the Virginia *Standards of Quality*, the Virginia *Standards of Learning*, and the Board's *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*.

   b. The applicant assures that all elements of the proposed school(s) will comport with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

   c. The applicant certifies that to the best of his/her knowledge the information in the application is correct, that all application elements have been addressed as required in this application, and that the applicant understands and will comply with the assurances.

   d. The applicant agrees to conduct a review of their planning phase, and submit milestones and deliverables as required, including, but not limited to, a comprehensive report with details for the projected Lab School implementation, expenses, and other items as may be prescribed by the Department.

e. Applicants receiving a Planning Grant are expected, by the end of the term of such grant, to submit a subsequent application for the launch of a Lab School to the Department, for review and approval by the Board.

f. Applicant provides assurance to subscribe to the following reporting requirements timetable:

TIMELINE	BENCHMARK AND DELIVERABLES
On or before the end of the first quarter of the grant term	Awardee must present a proposed list of milestones, measures of success, and deliverables.
On or before the end of the second quarter of the grant term	Awardee must submit a progress report in order to be eligible for the second installment of the award.
On or before the end of the third quarter of the grant term	Awardee must present progress on milestones and deliverables, including submission to the Board of an application for approval to launch a Lab School.
On or before the end of the grant term	Awardee is expected to have attained approval by the Board to launch a Lab School.

2. **SIGNATURES**

a. Higher Education Authorization:

Signature of [AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE of public institution of higher education; public higher education center, institute, or authority; or an eligible institution]:

Printed Name: DoVeanna Fulton
Title: Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs
Date: January 26, 2023

b. Fiscal Agent Authorization (if applicable):

Signature of Division Superintendent of Fiscal Agent School Division:

Printed Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Title: Click or tap here to enter text.
Date: Click or tap here to enter text.

c. Signature of Chairman of School Board of Fiscal Agent:

Printed Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Title: Click or tap here to enter text.
Date: Click or tap here to enter text.

D. REGIONAL AND APPLICANT DIVERSITY

1. Planning Grants will be awarded in a manner that encourages ready access to Lab School options and the establishment of Lab Schools in each of the Department's eight Superintendent regions.

2. Indicate Proposed Name(s) of Lab School: NSU Lab School (replacing NSU Preschool Academy)

3. Identify Proposed Physical Location(s) of Lab School: 700 Park Avenue, Norfolk, VA 23504

E. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, GOAL, AND TIMELINE

1. **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**
   a. General description of the program *(2-3 paragraphs maximum)*:

   Reading for STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) is an interdisciplinary, gifted program constructed to shape early literacy skills of students in grades PK3 through 2nd. Fundamentally, students need reading skills to learn. Early grades serve as the foundation for those basic competencies that sustain a successful academic trajectory. However, in the aftermath of a global pandemic with quantified learning loss, gaining necessary reading skills has been challenged and, in some cases, negated.

   Reading for STEAM seeks to implement core literacy instruction utilizing science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. With the career demands of these fields, students will gain early exposure and interests as they learn to build something, code a computer program, create a work of art, or conduct a science experiment.

   b. Rationale for the program *(2-3 paragraphs maximum)*:

   In an October 2022, issue of *The Virginia-Pilot,* Nour Habib reports, "Statewide, Virginia lost about eight months (-0.92 grade equivalents) in math learning and more than five months (-0.63) in reading…Virginia was sixth worst in reading drops for Black students and second worst for math drops for Black students." The results of the pandemic have left a void that requires the immediate attention of intentional programs to close the achievement gap. Reading in STEAM seeks to address reading by implementing the targets outlined in the Virginia Literacy Act (VLA).

   Reading Specialist trained in the science of reading will collaborate with teachers, families, and tutors to implement the Reading in STEAM program. By creating and implementing a literacy plan based in science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics, students will not only gain reading skills, but problem solving and critical thinking skills. The framework to combat learning loss for students by implementing "core literacy instruction based in scientifically based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction."

   Underrepresentation of marginalized populations in gifted education and STEM focused programs has remained persistent in P-12 school divisions. A number of

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factors contribute to this situation, such as economic disparities, access to enrichment programs, and limited culturally relevant instructional delivery practices (Ford, et.al, 2021; Ford, 2012). By implementing a curriculum grounded in gifted education and STEM standards for young children, a strong academic foundation is created that provides underrepresented student populations with early opportunities to successfully engage in gifted and STEM programs. Furthermore, Ford and Collins (2021) emphasize the importance of providing early experiences that build a strong STEM identity and foster talent development.

c. Nature of innovation proposed for the program, including how it will improve student academic proficiency, mastery, college and career readiness, and long-term outcome goal *(2-3 paragraphs maximum):*

A well-designed, early childhood learning environment that emphasizes literary has direct and indirect impact on academic achievement throughout the elementary years where the foundation for literacy and social development are formed (Gibson, et.al., 2021). This program seeks to provide students with culturally sustaining instructional delivery that will not only encourage a love for reading and writing, but spark curiosity, innovation, and critical thinking.

The ability to read and write is strongly correlated with academic achievement and academic opportunity. With the STEAM approach, the students are provided early exposure to a plethora of careers. Involvement in the STEAM fields has been elusive for many marginalized populations. This program provides students with the activities, opportunities, and tools necessary to master skills required for success in the post-secondary coursework needed to flourish in this fields.

Children from higher socio-economic households have a much greater chance of receiving preschool instruction from highly qualified teachers offering a rigorous early elementary curriculum (Ford, et.al, 2021). An early childhood learning environment with highly qualified teachers that adhere to early childhood gifted education program standards, which is accessible for marginalized populations provides a greater likelihood of early identification and access to gifted and talented education (GATE) for underrepresented student populations.

d. Expected student learning benefits *(2-3 paragraphs maximum):*

The benefits to student learning in this program are multi-layered. First, measurements for academic achievement rely heavily upon reading and writing abilities. The strength of a student's reading and writing skills opens opportunities for engagement in advance placement courses and identification for accelerated programs, including gifted and talented coursework.

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Second, the program embraces reading in the content area. Thus, students are engaged in creating works of art, conducting science experiences, and constructing solutions using engineering and technology concepts. By utilizing well-designed literacy activities, strong and reluctant readers are equally challenged and will experience growth.

Third, the program recognizes that inadequate literacy skills can negatively impact students beyond their compensatory education. According to the Reading Foundation, "Low achievement in reading is also the common denominator in school discipline, attendance and dropout rates, and juvenile crime." Additionally, students not meeting reading benchmarks in elementary school often struggle emotionally, socially, and financially as adults (Tam, 2017). Creating a foundation for students that steers them away from the ills within our society, allows them a pathway to become overall good citizens.

e. Expected teacher learning and professional development benefits *(2-3 paragraphs maximum):*

The initial teacher learning, and professional development benefits will mirror those detailed in the VLA. Teachers will:

- Use evidence-based literacy curriculum for the entire literacy block
- Assess student learning using approved literacy screeners routinely throughout the year
- Use student-level data to inform both whole group instruction and individualized instruction and intervention

Teachers will also receive regular in-service training in evidence-based literacy instruction. This will allow them to plan effective lessons that allow connections to visual and performing arts, critical thinking, sciences (both Biology and Chemistry), and computer information systems.

f. Content areas addressed:

The contents addressed including literacy (English language arts), sciences, technology, engineering, visual and performing arts, and mathematics. This cross-curricular approach will be a "a model for educating creative scientists who can develop innovative solutions to serious global problems" (Madden, et.al., 2013).

2. **GOAL**
State the overall proposed goal for the program:

The Reading for STEAM program has four goals:

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- Early identification of Gifted and Talented education among underrepresented students
- Increase school readiness for marginalized populations by using the PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening) test for progress and benchmark assessments.
- Provide early exposure to science, engineering, and computer science concepts.
- Decrease the number of students in kindergarten through second grade who are reading below benchmark on the Reading SOL.
- Learner-centered pedagogy through interactive learning and exposure to cutting-edge technology
- Research opportunities on developmentally appropriate instructional delivery methods and assessment practices for young children to increase knowledge and foster their love of art, math, and science
- Preparing future teachers with sound pedagogical knowledge of early childhood development, instructional delivery, and cultural responsiveness

3. **TIMELINE**
   Provide a timeline of the planning process, including the proposed date/school year for launch of a Lab School:

   2023-2024
   Quarter 1: July – September
   - Advertise and hire Reading Specialist
   - Purchase materials for the Reading in STEAM program
   - Provide professional development for all teaching staff in the science of reading
   - Advertise for and train tutors in the science of reading
   - Advertise to parents and families for fall enrollment – to admit PK3 and PK4 students
   - Hold an open house for the Reading in STEAM program inviting community partners, including the School of Education Advisory Board representing Norfolk Public Schools, Chesapeake City Schools, Suffolk Public Schools, Newport News Public Schools, and Hampton City Schools

   Quarter 2: October-December
   - Screen student population using PALS to create baseline data, along with early childhood reading diagnostic instruments
   - Use data to inform reading curriculum and instruction
   - Introduce and implement the science of reading within the curriculum
   - Host programs for student population in science, including the Virginia Living Museum, the Virginia Children's Museum, and Virginia Air and Space Museum
   - Take students on field trip to Chrysler Museum
   - Host a family literacy event to provide families with resources on evidence-based literacy instruction

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Quarter 3: January-March
- Provide professional development for teachers, staff, and tutors on evidence-based literacy instruction
- Administer diagnostic reading assessments
- Use data to inform reading curriculum and instruction
- Host programs for student population in Apple Innovations, including early computer coding
- Implement the interdisciplinary curriculum with physical education and mathematics
- Host a family literacy event to provide families with resources on evidence-based literacy instruction

Quarter 4: April-June
- Provide professional development for teachers, staff, and tutors on evidence-based literacy instruction
- Administer diagnostic reading assessments
- Use data to inform reading curriculum and instruction
- Host student Gallery Day highlighting work created in the Reading in STEAM program
- Host a family literacy event to provide families with resources on evidence-based literacy instruction for the summer

F. STUDENT POPULATION AND RELEVANT RESEARCH

1. TARGETED STUDENT POPULATION
a. Describe the student population and discuss why they are proposed. Include the number of students, reporting group(s), and grade level(s):

The first cohort of students will be PK3 and PK4 students whose families qualify for TANF benefits within the southside Hampton Roads area. Each year, the program will add a grade level until it reaches grade 2.

GRADES TO BE SERVED FOR THE FULL TERM OF THE APPROVED LAB SCHOOL CONTRACT (PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY*)			
Pre-K	x	Sixth Grade	
Kindergarten	x	Seventh Grade	

First Grade	x	Eighth Grade	
Second Grade	x	Ninth Grade	
Third Grade		Tenth Grade	
Fourth Grade		Eleventh Grade	
Fifth Grade		Twelfth Grade	

*If the applicant intends to add or change grade levels at some point during the Lab School's operation, please provide this information in the education program section of the narrative.

    b. Describe the community(ies) the school(s) serves:
The communities to be served by the Lab School will be urban communities within Hampton Roads where lower socio-economic populations reside and receive financial support through resources such as TANF.

    c. If the Lab School is going to have a specialized focus (e.g., Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics [STEM], at-risk students, special education, career and technical education, gifted education, classical education, etc.), please describe the focus:
NSU Lab School will be identified as a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) School. The teaching of creativity and reading is integrated into all instruction, with learning activities that are engaging and relevant to each of the fields within STEAM.

2. <u>RELEVANT RESEARCH</u>
Discuss any relevant research tied to the proposed student population and overall goal of the program to demonstrate that it will improve student academic proficiency, mastery, college and career readiness, and long-term outcomes:

According to the Reading Foundation, "Without a strong foundation in reading, children are left behind at the beginning of their education. They lag in every class, year after year because more than 85 percent of the curriculum is taught by reading. And by the end of third grade, 74 percent of struggling readers won't ever catch up". This research, along with statistics mentioned in the Program Description, will also show that marginalized populations, namely Black students, are the most impacted by poor reading skills. This contributes to the over-representation of these populations in juvenile crime statistics.

Consistently, research demonstrates the importance of access to quality preschool educational programs for young children, particularly for children of color and children living in poverty. Hart and Risley (2003) found that children from lower income families

experienced a nearly 40-million-word deficit compared to children from professional families and a nearly 25-million-word deficit compared to children from working-class families. This vocabulary deficit over time manifests itself in difficulties with reading comprehension and other literacy measures.

G. COLLABORATION AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

1. Describe the involvement of local school divisions, community-based organizations, employers, teachers, and parents in the planning, development, and implementation of the proposed program:

The School of Education Advisory Board consists of representatives from Norfolk Public Schools, Chesapeake City Schools, Suffolk Public Schools, Newport News Public Schools, and Hampton City Schools. Together with the Dean and faculty, they support the purpose and goals of a new laboratory school. They believe that the most pressing issue facing the Commonwealth post-pandemic is reading deficiencies across PK-12. This program seeks to build a solid foundation in early grades utilizing evidence-based literacy instruction.

Additionally, the SOE has a partnership with Eastern Virginia Medical School's "Minus 9 to 5" program. They serve as the Hub of Ready Region Southeastern. Their purpose is to strengthen Southeastern Virginia by fostering equity and opportunities for young children, their families, and all who are dedicated to help them thrive. This collaboration will be an asset as we continue to plan for the NSU Lab School.

The implementation of STEAM as a focus is a way to make real world issues and problems a focus thus creating connections for students as they reimagine literacy in their daily activities. A student is much more likely to be engaged if they can make see themselves in the curriculum. Adding their lived experiences only strengthens instruction so that students have a sense of belonging. Families are partners in this work. Parents will "support literacy development at home and will be able to participate in the development of their child's student reading plan, if their child does not meet literacy benchmarks" (VLA).

Community-based organizations, such Top Ladies of Distinction Hampton Roads Chapter, have been partners with the NSU Preschool Academy for several years. From donating books and pillows for naptime to working as volunteers, these partners serve with their resources and time. The programs and curricula have been successful in the past because of such partners who have pledged to continue their efforts with the newly organized laboratory school and the Reading in STEAM program.

2. If the Lab School is going to be in partnership with a local school division(s), please describe the partnership briefly:
   Not applicable.

H. SUSTAINABILITY

1. The goal of the Planning Grant program is to support public institutions of higher education; public higher education centers, institutes, or authorities; or eligible institutions of higher education as defined in the Tuition Assistance Grant Program, as defined in § 23.1-628, as they develop and implement programs in order to create or improve capacity to operate and sustain a Lab School independently of long-term state funding, and in a manner that promotes quality, innovation, and program results.

2. Please describe the capacity of your public institution of higher education; public higher education center, institute, or authority; or eligible institution to implement a Lab School:

   Norfolk State University (NSU) Preschool Academy is affiliated with the School of Education. It is a full and part-time early childhood and care program for children ages 2 ½ through 4 ½ years old. It has been in operation since 1980. The program has a long history of laying a strong foundation for young children's education.

   The reorganization from NSU Preschool Academy to a new laboratory school will assist with the transition from a childcare focus to an early childhood literacy focus. Funds from this proposal will make this possible.

3. Identify potential affiliates, partners, and describe potential sustainable funding sources:

   Norfolk State University works closely with Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) to train teacher education students. They serve as a home for student internships and practicums. Several principals and teachers serve on the SOE Advisory Board who provides input on curriculum and best practices in training future teachers.

   Funds have been secured from the VECF Mixed Delivery Grant award to provide the state portion of funding for parents applying to the NSU Preschool Academy. This assists families with securing enrollment for their children.

   The School of Education has an approved budget within the Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Special Education that funds personnel and supplies. The building which houses the laboratory school space is owned by Norfolk State University. The foundation is already in place to implement the program being requested for by this grant.

4. Identify potential barriers to the planning process and possible ways to address them:

One barrier would be hiring highly qualified teachers to work in the Reading in STEAM program. With shortages throughout the Commonwealth, we are competing against school districts for the Reading Specialist position. One way to address this is to offer a competitive salary with a signing bonus and/or relocation expenses.

I. BUDGET OF DIRECT COSTS (WITH $200,000 MAXIMUM)

1. Complete the budget table below outlining the financial plan of how the Planning Grant will be used in the effort to establish a Lab School. The Planning Grant period and use of funds may not exceed 12 months from the date of award.

2. Only includes direct operating costs. Indirect costs and capital outlay costs are not allowed. Include a description of expenses that explains appropriateness of expenses based on the category descriptions shown below.

3. All expenses must be directly related to the proposed Planning Grant activities. Applicants are not guaranteed the requested award amount and any award may be proportionally adjusted according to application's weighted Planning Grant Application Evaluation Rubric score and to reflect only those expenditures that are designated as permissible.

4. **Note: Any unspent Planning Grant funds remaining at the end of the grant term must be returned by the recipient to the Department.**

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF EXPENSES	FUNDING REQUESTED
1000 – Personal Services	Reading Specialist	$65,000
2000 – Employee Benefits	Fringe, Benefits, and Bonuses	$14,100
3000 – Purchased/Contractual Services	Literacy Screeners Consultant/Lecturers Memberships for museums and cultural experiences (Virginia Living Museum, Virginia Aquarium, Virginia Children's	$25,000

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF EXPENSES	FUNDING REQUESTED
	Museum, Nauticus, NASA, Hampton Air and Space Museum)	
4000 – Internal Services	Printing, Website and Marketing Office Supplies Health Physical Education Equipment	$5,000
5000 – Other Services	Professional Development – evidence-based literacy instruction Tutors Field Trips – Admission and Transportation Food for Family Engagement Events	$40,000
6000 – Materials and Supplies	Consumable Instructional Materials Classroom Library Kits Elementary Science and Mathematics Lab Kits Felt boards Technology – Apple Computer Stations/iPads (2 mobile labs)	$50,900
Total		**$200,000***

* Total cannot exceed $200,000 with additional funding considered at the discretion of the Department on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with available funds.

Please visit the Virginia Department of Education OMEGA object codes universal guidelines for a complete description of the budget categories.

Below is a list of the Virginia Department of Education OMEGA object codes universal guidelines:

Postal Services 63501
Printing Services 63502
Printing Services Campus 64006
Food Services Campus 64050
Computer Hardware 64060
Computer Software 64061
Computer Operating 64063

Office Supplies 64228
Computer Software 67008
Educational Supplies 64228
Educational Equipment 67011
Laboratory Equipment 67019
Teaching Faculty 61207

APPENDIX: PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION EVALUATION RUBRIC

For the applicant's information, the following will be used as the Planning Grant Application Evaluation Rubric for this application. Applicant does not need to complete this section.

AREA OF CONSIDERATION	DESCRIPTION	POINTS AVAILABLE
Targeted Student Population(s) and Relevant Research	Application proposes intention to serve at-risk students and/or offer a new, innovative model of instruction grounded in evidence-based practices to improve student academic proficiency, mastery, college and career readiness, and long-term outcomes.	**30**
Clarity of Program Description Goal, and Timeline	The program description and goal are clear and attainable. Indication of programmatic, operational, and infrastructural capacity to advance an application to launch a Lab School program, as well as launch a Lab School no later than the 2024-2025 school year. Additional preference will be given to applicants with an earlier Lab School launch timeline.	**20**
Sustainability	Evidence of institutional commitment to the viability of a Lab School in a manner that promotes quality, innovation, program results, and sustainability.	**20**
Collaboration	Evidence of engagement and collaboration with stakeholders, including local school divisions, community-based organizations, employers, teachers and parents.	**15**
Regional and Applicant Diversity	Evidence of diversity of location, with the goal of Lab Schools in each Superintendent region. For applicant diversity, preference will be given to new applicants in the event a concurrent applicant has previously received a Planning Grant during the current application period.	**15**