



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item: C

Date: November 6, 2023

Title: University of Mary Washington – VDOE Documentation of Complete and Compliant Application

Presenter: Dr. Andy Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent of Strategic Innovation

Purpose of Presentation

Review of documentation of complete and compliant Laboratory School Application for Academy of Technology and Innovation at University of Mary Washington, a laboratory school proposal from a collaboration between University of Mary Washington and Stafford County Public Schools as the fiscal agent and hiring agent, as well as the four other school divisions in Planning District 16: Caroline County, Fredericksburg City, King George County, and Spotsylvania County.

Executive Summary

The laboratory school application entitled Academy of Technology and Innovation at UMW (“UMW Application”) was received from University of Mary Washington (“Applicants”) on August 7, 2023. In accordance with the Laboratory School Application Process, the UMW Application was reviewed for completion and compliance by the Application Review Technical Expert Committee, a team of Virginia Department of Education Subject Matter Experts (“VDOE SME”). The goal of the Application Review Technical Expert Committee is to document the needed technical expertise and provide counseling to the Applicants to identify and correct any potential deficiencies in the planning and implementation of the proposed College Partnership Laboratory School, determine compliance with state law or regulation, highlight potential problems or red flags with information contained in the UMW Application, and to identify aspects of the proposal that are especially exciting or unique.

Dr. Andy Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent of Strategic Innovation, coordinated the efforts of the VDOE SME team who reviewed the UMW Application and/or the UMW Addendum for completeness and compliance. The VDOE SME team is comprised of the following VDOE staff:

- Dr. Andrew Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent
- Robert Gilstrap (Office of Licensure and School Leadership)
- Amy Siepka (Office of Accountability)
- Rebecca Askew (Office of Policy)
- Edward Lanza (Office of Budgeting)
- Melissa Vasquez (Department of Policy and Communications)
- Dr. Samantha Hollins (Department of Special Education and Student Services)
- Dave Myers (Office of Data, Research and Technology)

Each VDOE SME was provided with the Laboratory School Criteria Checklist Worksheet. Areas of expertise were assigned to various staff subject to their education expertise at the VDOE. A compilation of these comments is included in the Excel spreadsheet entitled VDOE Completeness and Compliance Report (Attachment 2).

The first round of counseling from VDOE SME review was provided to the Applicants the week of August 21, 2023, via phone call and written documentation from the VDOE SME's. The Applicants analyzed the feedback constructively and provided a UMW updated Application with responses to each of the VDOE SME action discussion points on September 25, 2023. The VDOE SME reviewed the UMW updated Application immediately and provided insights and feedback on the UMW updated Application for completion of this report to the College Partnership Laboratory School Standing Committee ("Standing Committee"). Follow-up feedback has been provided to the Applicants.

On October 12, 2023, VDOE staff opened a public comment forum on the Application through [Virginia Education Update #2023-15](#). The public comment forum closed on October 27, 2023, and received no comments.

The Virginia Laboratory School Initiative is in alignment with [Board of Education Goals from the 2018-2023 Comprehensive Plan](#).

Action Requested

This application is being submitted to the Standing Committee for final review. VDOE staff requests that the Standing Committee endorse the application for approval and refer to the Board of Education for review.

VDOE Recommendation

The concept of a dual enrollment career academy focused on the application of computer science, data science, and broader technology across content areas and economic industries through work-based learning experiences proposed by the UMW is an innovative and desirable laboratory school program. With the students remaining enrolled in their local school divisions,

it appears UMW functions more as a program than a standalone Lab School. This is an acceptable approach to meeting the intent of the lab school concept.

The Applicants responded very well to initial feedback and coaching provided by the VDOE SME team, and provided the additional information requested. The Applicants have an operational dual enrollment program with a sustainable governance structure, including a sustainable financial model for the operation of the lab school program.

Overall, the VDOE recommends the UMW Program is operational and ready to implement.

Previous Review or Action

No previous review or action by the Standing Committee.

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

Subsection A of § [22.1-349.6](#) of the Code of Virginia states, in part, that “[t]he Board shall establish procedures for receiving, reviewing, and ruling upon applications and shall make a copy of any such procedures available to all interested parties upon request. . . . The Board’s review procedures shall establish a review committee that may include experts with the operation of similar schools located in other states.”