



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item: F

Date: November 15, 2023

Title: First and Final Review of College Partnership Laboratory School Application from Germanna Community College

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

Purpose of Presentation

Action required by state or federal law or regulation (i.e., a change in law requires a change in program requirements; this is part of a regulatory action).

Executive Summary

On August 10, 2023, Germanna Community College (“Germanna”) submitted a college partnership laboratory school (“lab school”) application for Germanna’s Future Educator’s Academy (“FEA application”) for consideration by the Board of Education (“Board”). In accordance with the Board’s [Guidelines for the Approval of College Partnership Laboratory Schools](#) and [the process](#) established by the Board’s College Partnership Laboratory Schools Standing Committee (“Standing Committee”), the application was reviewed by a subject-matter expert group (“SME group”) composed of staff of the Virginia Department of Education (“VDOE”).

The VDOE SME group generated a completeness and compliance review (“compliance review”), which was submitted to the Standing Committee for review at its meeting on October 3, 2023. The Standing Committee received the FEA application and completeness and compliance report, and it also asked questions of representatives from Germanna after a detailed presentation from the Germanna applicants including Taylor Landrie, Special Assistant to the President at Germanna Community College, Brenda Byard, Retired Dean, Early College & High School Partnerships at Laurel Ridge Community College, Dr. Anthony S. Brads, Division Superintendent for Culpepper County Public Schools and Dr. Janet Gullickson, President of Germanna Community College. The Standing Committee approved First Review of the FEA application and VDOE staff posted the FEA application for the 10-day public comment period on October 12 and it remained available until October 27. No comment was received.

On November 6, 2023, the FEA application returned to the Standing Committee for final review. Dr. Andy Armstrong provided the Standing Committee with an overview of the objectives of the Germanna FEA lab school, the VDOE Expert team completion and compliance process, as well as their compliance coaching and review of additional application materials received from Germanna after first review. The Germanna applicants were present at the meeting and answered questions posed by the Standing Committee at final review. The Standing Committee unanimously voted to endorse the Germanna FEA lab school application and refer to the Board for approval.

The application proposes for Germanna to begin a lab school in collaboration and partnership with Laurel Ridge Community College and James Madison University, and school divisions in Culpeper, Orange, Madison, Clarke, Fauquier, Frederick, Page, Rappahannock, Shenandoah, and Warren counties, and the city of Winchester. Germanna has supported early college students in Virginia within the Germanna Scholars program and Gladys P. Todd Academy since 2014 and 2015, respectively. These students complete an associate degree in general studies concurrently while completing the requirements designated in the profile of a Virginia high school graduate with an advanced studies diploma. Germanna's existing programs with partnering school divisions mentioned above have been successful with 93% of early college students completing their academic programs.

The proposed lab school named "Future Educators Academy" ("FEA"), is an innovative early college academy that focuses on providing high-quality, accelerated teacher education to produce exceptional teachers, responsive to the continuing shortage of qualified professional teachers in Central Virginia. Students enrolled in the FEA lab school will experience hands-on exposure to the profession and participate in a streamlined, scalable model designed to accelerate the path to full teacher licensure. The lab school would address multiple desirable outcomes for students, future teachers, and regional schools with hiring needs, including the following:

- Students will gain valuable teacher readiness skills from an integrated learning program and a project-based learning environment.
- Students have dual enrollment opportunities and can earn an associate degree along with their high school graduation.
- Future/student teachers can earn their bachelor's degree in 2 years after high school graduation and will be available for hire as teachers by participating regional schools at age 21/22.

- Promote a virtuous cycle, with FEA alumni teaching in the region with a two-year minimum teaching contract and hosting new FEA students for observations and practicums.

The Lab School statutes favor control by the institute of Higher Education. The governance structure of the FEA lab school meets those criteria. In addition, James Madison University is operating in tandem with the FEA program to ensure the FEA earned associate degree transfers unhindered to the institution's education bachelor prerequisites. VDOE SME team will continue to advise Germanna on meeting statutory compliance within the Applicant's constitution, governance, and bylaws.

The approval of lab schools aligns with Priority 1 of the Board's *Comprehensive Plan 2018–2023*: provide high-quality, effective learning environments for all students.

Action Requested

First and final review: Action requested at this meeting.

Superintendent's Recommendation

On the basis of the recommendations from the Standing Committee, the Superintendent of Public Instruction ("Superintendent") recommends that the Board of Education waive first review and approve the Germanna lab school application for a three-year period with annual reviews.

The Superintendent further recommends that the Board delegate to the President of the Board and the Superintendent final negotiation of the college partnership laboratory school contract with Germanna, including awarding start-up funds and up to \$6 million in per-pupil funding from the College Partnership Laboratory School Fund in accordance with the Board's [Guidelines and Criteria for the Award and Distribution of Lab School Start-Up and Per-Pupil Operating Funding Grants for Approved Lab Schools](#).

Rationale for Action

The Germanna lab school proposal partners with James Madison University, a highly regarded institute of higher education with various programs that lead to licensure or advanced study in education. The underlying school model is proven and operational as a dual enrollment program, and the partnership with James Madison University reinforces the teacher training component through the lab school model. Additionally, the proposal has undergone a thorough review process by the Standing Committee. Approval at the November 15, 2023, meeting of the Board is critical to allowing the lab school to open for the 2024–2025 school year.

Previous Review or Action

The Germanna application has undergone two reviews by the Board’s Standing Committee:

Date: October 3, 2023

Action: First Review of College Partnership Laboratory School Application from Germanna Community College

Date: November 6, 2023

Action: Final Review of College Partnership Laboratory School Application from Germanna Community College

Background Information and Statutory Authority

[Chapter 19.1](#) of Title 22.1 of the *Code of Virginia* sets the statutory requirements for lab schools and the process for approving such schools.

Section [22.1-349.6](#) requires the Board to “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. If the Board finds that the application is incomplete, the Board shall request the necessary additional information from the applicant. The Board’s review procedures shall establish a review committee that may include experts with the operation of similar schools located in other states.”

In accordance with § [22.1-349.6](#), the Board has set the [Guidelines for the Approval of College Partnership Laboratory Schools](#). Moreover, in preparation for receiving applications, the Board re-formed the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee met from 2010–2013 and had new members appointed by the Board President in December 2022. The Standing Committee comprises five members: Joan Wodiska (Chair), Dr. Pam Moran (Vice-Chair), and John Bailey, as well as Board members Bill Hansen and Andy Rotherham.

The Standing Committee has had eight public meetings in 2023. After each meeting, the Standing Committee has provided a report on progress to the Board. In its meetings, the Standing Committee has setup a process for reviewing applications, including a SME review by VDOE staff; standardized process documents, such as application rubrics, compliance reports, and reports to the Board; revised the lab school application; reviewed applications from multiple applicants; and received public comment.

Upon receiving the Germanna lab school application on August 10, 2023, Dr. Andy Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent of Strategic Innovation for the Virginia Department of Education, convened a SME group in accordance with the process established by the Standing Committee. The SME group was composed of the following individuals:

- Dr. Andrew Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent of Strategic Innovation
- Dr. Samantha Hollins, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services
- Ms. Melissa Velazquez, Assistant Superintendent of Policy and Communications
- Mr. Jim Chapman, Director of Board Relations
- Mr. Robert Gilstrap, Assistant Superintendent for Education Preparation
- Mr. Edward Lanza, Director of Budgeting
- Ms. Amy Siepka, Director of Accountability
- Ms. Rebecca Askew, Director of Policy

The lab school application was reviewed by members of the SME group for completeness and compliance according to their areas of expertise. The compliance report was then provided to the Standing Committee for first review on October 3, 2023.

At first review, the Germanna applicants presented detailed information and insight to the Standing Committee on their plan for their lab school model. The Standing Committee queried the applicants on various portions of the application, with emphasis on parent/family engagement, sustainability of the apprenticeship/residency teacher training model, plans to develop the pre-K through 8th grade portion of the lab school program and teacher residency/retention after graduation. The Germanna applicants responded to all questions, and the Standing Committee approved first review, and cleared the Germanna application for the 10-day public comment posting period. The Standing Committee recommended the Germanna application to advance to second review at the November 6, 2023, Standing Committee meeting.

At the Standing Committee meeting in November, Dr. Andy Armstrong stated the Germanna Community College Future Educators Academy Lab School is compliant and ready to implement and recommended to the Committee that the Future Educators Academy be approved on second review to be forwarded to the Virginia Board of Education for their consideration for approval at the November 15, 2023, meeting. The Germanna applicants were present at the meeting to answer any questions posed by the Standing Committee at final review. Satisfied with all Germanna applicant responses to their inquiries, the Standing Committee endorsed the application and recommended the application be presented to the Board at its next meeting.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Standing Committee has provided opportunity for public comment on agenda items, including the Germanna application, at each of the meetings where the application was reviewed. Additionally, the application was posted for a 10-day public comment period in

accordance with the Standing Committee's process. On October 12, 2023, VDOE staff opened a public comment forum on the Application through [Virginia Education Update #2023-15](#).

The Germanna lab school application has received letters of support from numerous stakeholders, which have been included in the materials for this item, including the following:

- Bryan Rothamel, Economic Development Director, Culpeper County Department of Economic Development
- Dr. Chuck Bishop, Division Superintendent, Clarke County Public Schools
- Amy Frazier, President/CEO, Culpepper Chamber of Commerce
- Ashley Carter, President, Career Partners, Inc.
- W.H. Hager, President, OCHS Alumni and Friends Foundation.
- Simon C. Fiscus, Executive Director, Skyline CAP Inc.
- Jennifer S. Gentry, Ed.D., Vice Chancellor, Institutional Advancement, Virginia Foundation for Community College Education
- George C. Hummer, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools, Frederick County Public Schools
- Susan G. Bramley, President, Madison County Education Foundation
- Jane Bowling-Wilson, Executive Director, Northern Piedmont Community Foundation
- Bruce L. Davis, Special Assistant to the President, Germanna Educational Foundation
- Patrick Barker, CEcD, Executive Director, Frederick County Economic Development Authority
- Dr. Major R. Warner, Jr., Deputy Superintendent, Fauquier County Public Schools
- April M. Bruce, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Winchester Public Schools
- Chris Ballenger, Ed.D., Superintendent, Warren County Public Schools
- Cynthia Schneider, CEO, Top of Virginia Regional Chamber
- Rose Deal, Economic Development & Tourism Director, Orange County Economic Development
- Melody Sheppard, Superintendent, Shenandoah County Public Schools
- Brittany Dwyer Gianoli, Executive Director, Headwaters/Rappahannock County Public Education Foundation
- Steve Cox, President & CEO, Rappahannock Goodwill Industries
- Dr. Antonia Fox, Ed.D., Superintendent, Page County Public Schools
- Cal Ewing, President, Orange Rotary Club
- Deanne Marshall, OCEF Treasurer/Secretary, Orange County Education Foundation; and
- Evelyn Pritchett Jackson, President, Orange County of Chamber of Commerce

Implementation and Communication

Upon approval by the Board, VDOE staff will coordinate with the Office of the Attorney General to execute a contract between the Board and Germanna to establish the lab school within 90 days, in accordance with § [22.1-349.5](#) of the *Code of Virginia*, as well as §§ [22.1-349.3](#)(C) and [22.1-349.4](#).

The approval of the lab school will be publicized through the VDOE, Germanna, Laurel Ridge Community College, and participating school divisions.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

This item will not impact resources at the VDOE.