



COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP LABORATORY SCHOOLS
STANDING COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATION REPORT
College Partnership Laboratory School Application For:
University of Mary Washington

November 2023
VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

College Partnership Laboratory Schools (Lab Schools) have fueled innovation and excellence in preK-12 education across the nation. Some of the nation's most prestigious schools were started as Lab Schools. Virginia has identified Lab Schools as a critical part of ensuring a high-quality, innovative, and diverse educational ecosystem in the Commonwealth.

BACKGROUND OF THE COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP LABORATORY SCHOOL FUND

The College Partnership Laboratory Schools Fund (Fund), set out in § [22.1-349.2](#) of the *Code of Virginia*, was first established in 2010 for the purpose of establishing and supporting College Partnership Laboratory Schools. During its 2022 Session, the General Assembly appropriated \$100,000,000 to the Fund.

The Virginia Board of Education (Board) is authorized to award up to \$5,000,000 from the Fund for planning grants to entities pursuing the creation of new Lab Schools. Additionally, the Board is authorized to award up to \$20,000,000 from the Fund for initial start-up cost funding grants (Start-Up Grants) for entities approved by the Board and awarded a contract to create a new Lab School and to distribute the remaining balance (\$75,000,000 or more) in per-pupil operating funding grants (Per-Pupil Funding Operating Grants) from the Fund for entities with approved Lab Schools.

Section [22.1-349.2](#) of the *Code of Virginia* and [Item 137.C.44](#) of the 2022 Appropriation Act direct the Board to establish criteria and guidelines for the distribution and award of moneys from the Fund prior to disbursement.

PURPOSE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

The Board's College Partnership Laboratory Schools Standing Committee (Standing Committee) is appointed by the Board. The purpose of the Standing Committee is to assist the Board in its approval process of College Partnership Laboratory School Applications (Application) submitted by Eligible Entities (Applicant).

Once received from the Applicant, the Application is reviewed for completeness and compliance by the Virginia Department of Education (Department), who may also secure technical assistance and/or coaching as needed for the Applicant. The Standing Committee receives the complete and compliant Application from the Department, meets with the Applicant(s), provides opportunity for public comment on the Application, and delivers a report on its recommendation to the Board for their decision.

The recommendation report to the Board provides an objective review and assessment of the Applicant's ability to achieve quality student performance through evidence of organizational effectiveness that supports a visionary educational process which promotes a culture of continuous, sustainable learning.

SUMMARY OF APPLICATION ELEMENTS TO BE REVIEWED

The Standing Committee's review and consideration of Applications includes evaluation of the information found in eight elements of the Application, summarized as follows:

1. **Executive Summary:** Does the Applicant provide the summary and address the need for the Lab School, its goals, and objectives?
2. **Mission and Vision:** Does the Applicant clearly communicate a mission and vision, including identification of the targeted student population, for the proposed Lab School to succeed?
3. **Educational Program:** Does the curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning?
4. **Governance:** Do the organizational structure and the roles and responsibilities enumerated for the governing board demonstrate clear leadership for the successful management and support of the proposed Lab School?
5. **Management Structure:** Does the Applicant address recruiting, staffing, leadership, licensure, employment policies, and performance evaluations sufficiently to demonstrate success for proposed Lab School? In addition, how does the Applicant address parent and community involvement; student recruitment plan, open enrollment and waiting list; student conduct; start-up plan with tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals; co-curricular and extracurricular programs, and partnerships with school divisions?
6. **Financial Operations Information:** Has the Applicant provided and addressed financial assumptions, start-up and five-year budgets, anticipated fundraising contributions, insurance coverage, a sound facilities plan, transportation services, including for students with disabilities, and food service operations to successfully start and maintain operations?
7. **Placement Plan:** Does the Applicant provide a plan for effective communication and placement of school students, teachers, and employees in the event of termination or revocation of the contract, including a plan for student records, student transfers, assistance to employees, and a close-out plan related to financial obligations and audits?
8. **Other Assurances and Requirement:** Does the Applicant demonstrate processes in place to implement and monitor federal and state compliance with regulations and waivers, including compliance with the federal *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act*, records retention schedules, and the *Virginia Freedom of Information Act*? Does the Applicant document collaborative partnerships with public school divisions and address conflicts of interest?

Public Comment: In addition to the elements found in the Application, the Standing Committee reviews and considers any public comments received when developing its recommendation and report for the Board.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The Standing Committee’s recommendation report to the Board includes the Report Elements criteria outlined below for the Board’s consideration and decision whether to approve a Lab School Application.

- I. **Overall Element Assessment:** The overall recommendation of the Standing Committee for this Element of the Application.
- II. **Element Rubric Rating:** The Standing Committee’s recommendation of the degree the Element defines areas of strength and/or opportunities for improvement.

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures
	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement

- III. **Public Comment Assessment:** The Standing Committee assessment of public comments received on the Application.
- IV. **Areas Requiring VDOE Reinforcement:** The Standing Committee’s recommendation for VDOE operational expertise that may be required by the Applicant in various areas of the Lab School’s operations.

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

ELEMENT 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The University of Mary Washington (“UMW”) to begin a lab school in collaboration and partnership with Stafford County Public Schools as the fiscal agent and hiring agent, as well as the four other school divisions in Superintendent’s Region III: Caroline County, Fredericksburg City, King George County, and Spotsylvania County named the Academy of Technology and Innovation (“ATI”).

The ATI program will adopt project-based learning, where field experiences will ensure students are able to witness and experience the application of computer science, data science, and broader technology across content areas and economic industries through work-based learning experiences. As part of this approach, intentionality will be given towards the provision of externships and internships to build the durable skills necessary for entering the workforce. The lab school would address multiple desirable outcomes for students, future teachers, and regional schools with hiring needs, including the following:

- ATI plans to leverage co-teaching approaches via have professors on-site at the lab school, and UMW College of Education students will be assigned to the lab school as one of their rotations.
- Leveraged with interdisciplinary approaches, providing students with project-based learning opportunities will enable students to apply their content knowledge, develop their durable skills, with opportunities for student internships and externships outside the classroom to apply their learning through various types of fieldwork.

With solid academic curriculum theory proposed and a state-of-the-art facility in place, the Standing Committee highly recommends the University of Mary Washington Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures
X	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement

PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

Lab School Application for University of Mary Washington

VDOE will support the applicant through the development of the contract with the Board and will provide technical assistance as needed as the school begins operations.

ELEMENT 2: MISSION AND VISION

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The mission of UMW ATI Lab School will provide the opportunity to specialize in computer science, data science, or a combination of the two fields that students can pursue over the course of their secondary coursework. UMW will leverage all three of its colleges to support the efforts of the lab school, providing content experts from the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Business to consult on the development of curricular resources and field experiences in partnership with the College of Education and Stafford Schools.

The Applicant’s Mission and Vision is summarized by the initial tagline, “Preparation. Collaboration. Innovation.” These three words capture ATI’s intended approach.

- **Mission:** Provide innovative, authentic learning experiences preparing students to leverage computer and data science across academic and economic sectors.
- **Vision:** Cultivate collaborative, innovative, and highly qualified learners, educators, and community contributors.

UMW ATI will has developed an innovative program within the confines of the SOQ and SOA, to determine student achievement on the SOL assessment. The needs of all students are met through partnership with UMW, interdisciplinary approach to course content and delivery and personalized learning methodologies. The school is open to all students from multiple backgrounds in collaboration and partnership with 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

The Applicant’s mission and vision clearly outlines the level of innovation anticipated and the targeted student. With completed planning and proposed programs and processes in place, the Standing Committee highly recommends the UMW ATI Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures
X	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement

PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

VDOE will support the applicant through the development of the contract with the Board and will provide technical assistance as needed as the school begins operations.

**ELEMENT 3: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:**

The Applicant plans to adopt curriculum and teaching methods that prioritize the following methodologies:

- **Co-teaching:** Leverage co-teaching approaches to provide more robust experiences for both K12 and higher education students. UMW plans to have professors on-site at the lab school, and College of Education students will be assigned to the lab school as one of their rotations. Secondary instructors will work with both UMW professors and UMW College of Education students to facilitate robust learning experiences for both high school and higher education students.
- **Interdisciplinary Approaches:** Provide opportunities for students to see and interact with the interdisciplinary nature of content areas where students leverage skills and content from across different disciplines to creatively build, propose, and defend solutions to real world problems.
- **Project-based Learning:** Leveraged with interdisciplinary approaches, providing students with project-based learning opportunities will enable students to apply their content knowledge, develop their durable skills, and build their resumes with authentic projects that can help them with future employability.
- **Application of Knowledge/Expeditionary Learning:** Provide opportunities for students to apply what they are learning outside the classroom walls to apply their learning through various types of fieldwork, externships or internships while experiencing learning environments that mimic the workplace.

The Applicant’s Executive Director of ATI is overseeing the Applicant’s curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices in partnership with superintendents and/or designees from each of the participating school divisions. With the required credentials for curriculum development and assessment in place, the Standing Committee highly recommends the UMW ATI Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures
X	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement

PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

The Applicant has proposed a solid, theoretical curriculum/instructional approach. VDOE can provide guidance on any statutory requirements related to expeditionary learning, internships, etc.

ELEMENT 4: GOVERNANCE

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The Applicant has identified a multi-tiered governance structure, with a governing board members include a representative from each committed school division. The governing board will also include key stakeholders from the University of Mary Washington, to include the Chief of Staff, Provost, and Vice Provost for Continuing and Professional Studies, as well as the deans from the three colleges.

Supporting the development and on-going refinement of the school will be a Superintendent’s Advisory Council, a Business and Community Committee, and a Parent, Teacher, Student Committee. The Superintendent’s Advisory Council will consist of superintendents from each of the participating school divisions and will support the lab school’s Executive Director to ensure that the lab school program remains responsive to the needs of each of the school divisions, provide input on logistical dynamics that need to be addressed, and provide overarching consult on both operational and instructional facets of program design and refinement.

Overall, each entity with a vested interest in the school will be actively involved in the governance of this proposed Lab School.

The Applicant’s proposed organizational structure and the roles and responsibilities enumerated for the governing board demonstrate clear leadership for the successful management and support of the Lab School. The Standing Committee highly recommends the UMW ATI Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures
X	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement

PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

UMW ATI has provided organizational charts as well as a draft document for governance. VDOE can provide guidance on any requirements related to the confines of the state statute that may be required.

ELEMENT 5: MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The Applicant has addressed all requested areas of management structure. ATI will work closely with both the fiscal agent, Stafford County Public Schools, as well as other partnering school systems in the recruitment and development of school leadership and staff. UMW and Stafford Schools already work closely together on a number of staff development initiatives, and we expect this to expand with the launch of the university partnership laboratory school.

At present, the school's faculty and leadership beyond the Executive Director do not yet exist. Utmost care will be given to hire educators who have experience and or aptitude of interdisciplinary approaches, working with a wide range of student abilities, and are willing to work collaboratively with higher education peers who will be on-site. All teachers will be fully licensed and endorsed in a minimum of one subject area, although most possess two or more endorsements to enable them to teach a variety of subjects.

School personnel will be hired directly by ATI at UMW, with delegation of certain human resource functions, salary, and benefits administration through the fiscal agent (Stafford County Public Schools) in the absence of UMW ATI-specific policies. The Applicant will utilize Stafford County's personnel policies through a Memorandum of Understanding.

The Applicant will assemble a working group to outline, build out, and propose a Student Code of Conduct policy to address student behavior, discipline, and participation in school activities. The school plans to start with the fiscal and hiring agent, Stafford Schools' policies in this area, consider and compare with other participating school division and model Virginia School Board Association policies, and consider any components unique to regional schools and/or the thematic nature of the school that would necessitate specific adjustments to the school's policies in this area.

The Applicant will use the Lab School Standing Committee's Best Practices on Administration of Lotteries for College Partnership Laboratory Schools to develop a fully operational lottery process.

The Applicant provided detailed information on overall school management including personnel management that sufficiently demonstrates success for the proposed Lab School. The Standing Committee highly recommends the UMW ATI Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures

Lab School Application for University of Mary Washington

X	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement
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PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

VDOE may need to provide guidance memorandums between school districts and the Lab School as well as guidance on the proposed school lottery process.

ELEMENT 6: FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONS INFORMATION

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The Applicant has provided and addressed financial assumptions, start-up, and five-year budgets. The Applicant is requesting a total of \$4.4 million in operational per-pupil funding support over a five-year period. The budget indicates the annual funding amount requested decreases each year as other funding sources are secured and the Lab School becomes self-sustaining, thereby maximizing the return on investment of public funds.

The Applicant’s current operations complies with all fiscal policies and procedures through their fiscal agent, Stafford County Public Schools. In addition, the Applicant will collaborate through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process to identify an auditing agency (e.g., Cherry Bekaert, etc.) to provide an annual financial audit to the Lab School’s governing board.

The Applicants have planned for philanthropic and corporate partners support including Annual Auctions, Summer Enrichment Opportunities, Professional Learning Opportunities. The Applicant’s goal is to work with those philanthropic and corporate partners on the specific ways they can support fundraising/revenue generating options and work to provide federal, state, and private funding to replace the Lab School grant funding over the next five (5) years.

The Applicant is working with both Stafford Schools and UMW staff to seek information on the types of insurance the school has as a result of current insurance carried by either UMW or Stafford Schools, as well as identifying the additional insurance the lab school will need.

The Applicant provided detailed budget and financial assumption information as well as its processes to provide successful operational requirements. The Standing Committee highly recommends the UMW ATI Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

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PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

Lab School Application for University of Mary Washington

VDOE may need to assist with fiscal agent status change and resultant Memorandums of Understanding between UMW, Stafford County Public Schools and other school districts.

ELEMENT 7: PLACEMENT PLAN

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The Applicant’s Lab School placement plan includes the current process for students to return to their home school division and/or move to another division out of state, etc. would have their records transferred electronically using the secure VDOE Dropbox process or other secure Student Information Systems procedures.

The Applicant’s proposed governing Board’s Constitution and Bylaws address the details of the close out plan related to financial obligations and audits by the partnering school boards. The Standing Committee highly recommends the UMW ATI Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

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PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

In the unlikely event the Lab School is terminated, VDOE may need to audit/identify unused funds requiring return to the State.

ELEMENT 8: OTHER ASSURANCES AND REQUIREMENTS

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The Applicant demonstrates and currently operates in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, including the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. The Standing Committee highly recommends the UMW ATI Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

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PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

VDOE may need to assist with approving additional waivers or assisting with review of Memorandums of Understanding to guard against conflicts of interest if future participation of school divisions is expanded.

CONCLUDING REPORT COMMENTS

The ATI program will adopt project-based learning, where field experiences will ensure students are able to witness and experience the application of computer science, data science, and broader technology across content areas and economic industries through work-based learning experiences. As part of this approach, intentionality will be given towards the provision of externships and internships to build the durable skills necessary for entering the workforce. The lab school would address multiple desirable outcomes for students, future teachers, and regional schools with hiring needs, including the following:

- ATI plans to leverage co-teaching approaches via have professors on-site at the lab school, and UMW College of Education students will be assigned to the lab school as one of their rotations.
- Leveraged with interdisciplinary approaches, providing students with project-based learning opportunities will enable students to apply their content knowledge, develop their durable skills, with opportunities for student internships and externships outside the classroom to apply their learning through various types of fieldwork.

Lab School Application for University of Mary Washington

With solid academic curriculum theory proposed and a state-of-the-art facility in place, the Standing Committee highly recommends the University of Mary Washington Laboratory School to the Board.

As this College Laboratory School Application is in the operational development stages, the Standing Committee has noted the areas where the VDOE may be required to provide operational assistance as the Applicant's Lab School begins to fully develop and grow.

After completing an objective review and thorough assessment of the Applicant's ability to achieve quality student performance through evidence of organizational effectiveness that supports a visionary educational process which promotes a culture of continuous, sustainable learning, the Standing Committee highly recommends the UMW ATI Laboratory School to the Board.