



# VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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# AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item:** A

**Date:** March 4, 2024

**Title:** Mountain Gateway Community College Technology Education Center Lab School (MG-TEC)– 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 Mountain Gateway Community College Technology Education Center Lab School (MG-TEC), a laboratory school proposal from a collaboration among Mountain Gateway Community College, Rockbridge County Public Schools, Buena Vista City Public Schools, Bath County Public Schools, Alleghany Highlands Public Schools, and Botetourt County Public Schools.

## **Executive Summary**

The laboratory school application entitled Mountain Gateway Community College Technology Education Center Lab School (“MGCC Application”) was received from Mountain Gateway Community College (“Applicants”) on July 12, 2023. In accordance with the Laboratory School Application Process, the MGCC 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 MGCC 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 UVA Application 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)
- Jason Ellis (Office of Accountability)
- Rebecca Askew (Office of Policy)
- Edward Lanza (Office of Budgeting)
- Erin Madden (Office of Policy)
- Melissa Velasquez (Department of Policy and Communications)
- Dr. Samantha Hollins (Department of Special Education and Student Services)
- Dr. 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 14, 2023. A technical assistance call was held on August 25, 2023 to discuss the SME feedback with the MGCC team. A revised application was submitted to the VDOE on September 10, 2023 and a subsequent technical assistance call was held on September 18, 2023. On October 19, 2023, an on-site technical assistance visit was held on the MGCC campus, and a further revised application was received on November 27, 2023. The VDOE SME review team provided feedback on the November 27 MGCC application revision during the week of December 6, 2023 and MGCC was provided with the results of the VDOE SME review team feedback on December 13, 2023. MGCC provided a revised application to the VDOE for first standing committee review and consideration on December 20, 2023 and provided a final application revision responsive to VDOE and standing committee feedback on February 21, 2024 for review and consideration by the standing committee at their March 4, 2024 meeting.

Due to the content of the MGCC presentation to the standing committee at their January 8, 2024 meeting, MGCC has provided written assurance to the standing committee and VDOE that MG-TEC staff do not have any conflicts of interest and will provide disclosure as required by the Lab School application and contract pending approval by the Board.

On January 18, 2024, VDOE staff opened a public comment forum on the Application through [Virginia Education Update #2024-03](#). The public comment forum closed on February 1, 2024 and one comment was received: "The addition of the Mountain Gateway Lab School will greatly benefit our region by giving students an opportunity to gain the skills and certifications

for employment in an educational model that fits their individual needs. The skills and certifications the students earn will allow them to stay in the region with a high earning career."

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 lab school designed collaboratively with multiple local school divisions to provide a comprehensive education toward practical skills required for meaningful IT careers proposed by the MGCC application is an innovative and desirable laboratory school program. With the students remaining enrolled in their local school divisions, it appears the Mountain Gateway Community College Technology Education Center Lab School (MG-TEC) 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 options for students including dual enrollment options with a sustainable governance structure, including a sustainable financial model for the operation of the lab school program.

Overall, the VDOE recommends the Mountain Gateway Community College Technology Education Center Lab School (MG-TEC) 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."

