



# VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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# AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item:** I

**Date:** April 11, 2024

**Title:** Old Dominion University Maritime Engineering and Environmental Studies Academy (MEESA) VDOE Documentation of Complete and Compliant Application

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

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## **Purpose of Presentation**

Review of documentation of complete and compliant Laboratory School Application for Old Dominion University Maritime Engineering and Environmental Studies Academy (MEESA), a laboratory school proposal from a collaboration between Old Dominion University and the school division of Newport News Public Schools.

## **Executive Summary**

The laboratory school application entitled Old Dominion University Maritime Engineering and Environmental Studies Academy (MEESA) (“ODU MEESA Application”) was received from Old Dominion University (“Applicants”) on February 2, 2024. In accordance with the Laboratory School Application Process, the ODU MEESA 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 ODU MEESA 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 ODU MEESA Application for completeness and compliance. The VDOE SME team responsible for reviewing the ODU MEESA application was comprised of the following VDOE staff:

- Dr. Andrew Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent
- Claire Bremner, Coordinator of Innovation
- Shawna LeBlond (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).

VDOE staff provided technical assistance to the ODU MEESA team during the development stage prior to submission of their application and following submission in preparation for Standing Committee review. Prior to application submission, technical assistance calls were held between VDOE and the ODU MEESA team on October 11, 2023; November 8, 2023; December 4, 2023, and January 8, 2024. Following submission of the application, additional technical assistance calls were held on February 12, 2024, and March 14, 2024. The first round of counseling from VDOE SME review was provided to the Applicants the week of March 19. A technical assistance call was held on March 21, 2024, to discuss budget and sustainability. A revised application was submitted to the VDOE on March 21, 2024, and an additional round of SME feedback was provided on March 28, 2024. A revised application, budget, and sustainability addendum were provided to the VDOE on March 28, 2024 and a final application responsive to suggested revisions was received on Monday, April 1, 2024 for completion of this report to the College Partnership Laboratory School Standing Committee (“Standing Committee”). Follow-up feedback has been provided to the Applicants.

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

**Action Requested**

The Standing Committee's goal for this meeting is First Review of the ODU MEESA Application and recommendations on the ability for the ODU MEESA Application to be presented/recommended to the Virginia Board of Education at the next scheduled meeting. In addition, the Standing Committee can also provide recommendations for additional Subject Matter Experts or coaching to satisfy Laboratory School statutory requirements for the ODU MEESA application.

**VDOE Recommendation**

The concept of a lab school designed collaboratively with local school divisions on preparing students to participate as citizens and future employees of a region heavily influenced by maritime Industries and preparing teachers to create experiential and innovative learning environments integrated with STEM concepts and Career and Technical Education by Old Dominion University is an innovative and desirable laboratory school program. With the students remaining enrolled in their local school divisions, it appears ODU MEESA 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 Old Dominion University Maritime Engineering and Environmental Studies Academy (MEESA) 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.”

