



COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP LABORATORY SCHOOLS
STANDING COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATION REPORT
College Partnership Laboratory School Application For:

Emory & Henry College

April 2024
VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Lab School Application for Emory & Henry College

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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:

Emory & Henry College (“EMC”) submitted a Laboratory School Application for the Southwest Virginia Healthcare Excellence Academy Lab School (“SWVA-HEALS”). SWVA-HEALS is a collaborative partnership between EMC, the public-school divisions of Smyth County, Wythe County, Washington County, the City of Bristol, Virginia Highlands Community College, Wytheville Community College, the A. Linwood Holton Governor’s School, and the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center (“Applicants”).

The SWVA-HEALS program is designed to establish a high school career academy for 10th-12th graders to serve as a “pipeline” for preparing future healthcare professionals to meet the workforce shortages in Southwest Virginia. The mission of SWVA-HEALS is to work collaboratively with regional education, healthcare, and community partners to provide a rigorous, high-quality learning environment that promotes increased awareness of potential healthcare careers and prepares college and career ready students to pursue the required college degrees and professional credentials that lead to healthcare careers. The overall goal of the program is to develop a sustainable high school academic pipeline through rigorous dual and concurrent enrollment courses in foundational sciences, introductory healthcare content, healthcare career exploration. The outcome of the lab school is to increase the number of future healthcare providers practicing in Southwest Virginia.

With solid academic curriculum theory proposed the Standing Committee highly recommends the Emory & Henry College 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 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 2: MISSION AND VISION

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The mission of SWVA-HEALS Lab School is to work collaboratively with regional education, healthcare, and community partners to provide a rigorous, high-quality learning environment that promotes increased awareness of potential healthcare careers and prepares college- and career-ready students to pursue the required college degrees and professional credentials that lead to healthcare careers. The vision for the Lab School is to establish an academic pipeline for preparing future healthcare professionals to meet the healthcare workforce needs in Southwest Virginia.

The SWVA-HEALS program will meet and/or exceed the Virginia Standards of Quality, the Virginia Standards of Learning, and the Virginia Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia by providing a curriculum that is designed to offer dual enrollment or concurrent courses. These courses will provide experiential learning opportunities, develop critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, creative thinking, communication skills, and collaboration skills. The SWVA-HEALS program plans to target 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students from the rural school divisions of Smyth County, Wythe County, Washington County, and the City of Bristol who have an interest in pursuing a career in healthcare.

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 SWVA-HEALS Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

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	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 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 SWVA-HEALS program incorporates the “career academy” educational model, which has been shown to effectively prepare 10th-12th grades students for healthcare-related college and career pathways. More importantly, healthcare focused career academies involving 10th-12th graders have consistently demonstrated positive outcomes including increased health literacy, increased awareness of health career options, and students’ intentions to pursue education pathways to healthcare careers. Additionally, healthcare focused career academies have demonstrated positive results in student engagement in high school and in students’ confidence in pursuing a college degree toward a healthcare career. Research shows growing up in a rural area continues to be a strong predictor of future healthcare practice in a rural area. This evidence strongly supports the “grow our own” approach central to the SWVA-HEALS program.

All courses in the SWVA-HEALS curriculum are dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment. The Virginia Community College System has policies in place to measure and report student progress in dual enrollment courses. Students may have opportunities to obtain certifications, certificates, a healthcare excellence certificate and/or an associate degree through the SWVA-HEALS program. The administrators of the SWVA-HEALS program will provide guidance and direction for course selections, monitor student progress in courses, and provide placements for shadowing and internship opportunities.

The Standing Committee highly recommends the SWVA-HEALS 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 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 Southwest Virginia Healthcare Excellence Governing Board consists of ten members from the participating institutions of higher education and each participating school district. The Governing Board shall be responsible for the management and operation of the Lab School, providing instructional oversight, consulting and providing feedback on personnel actions, the disciplining of students in the Lab School in consultation with the partnering school divisions, and other operational functions. The executive director and the assistant director will serve as non-voting members of the Governing Board.

Supporting the development and on-going refinement of the school will be an Advisory Committee is established to provide ongoing expertise, leadership and direction in the field of healthcare to best serve our students. This committee will be instrumental in assisting with ongoing evaluations of the SWVA-HEALS program and setting the direction for the future to help ensure that the SWVA- HEALS program is meeting the mission of addressing the shortages in the healthcare system.

The Advisory Committee includes representatives from the regional healthcare community (healthcare administrators, providers, and employers) as well as representatives from key community organizations such as the Smyth County Community Foundation, Smyth County HealthTrust, Mount Rogers Health District, Wellspring Foundation, Highlands Community Services, and Mount Rogers Community Services. This Advisory Committee may also include representation from parents, local school boards, community college boards, civic organizations, etc. 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 SWVA-HEALS 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
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PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

SWVA-HEALS 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. Emory and Henry College advertised and successfully hired the Director and Assistant Director of SWVA-HEALS with the support of each of the four school divisions who will have students served. Most teaching faculty in SWVA-HEALS will be current employees of Virginia Highlands Community College, Wytheville Community College, A. Linwood Holton Governor’s School, and/or Emory and Henry College. These employees would have been hired, or will be hired, according to VCCS policy, Washington County Public Schools’ policy, or the policy of EHC. Other employees will be hired following best practices in the state hiring process which includes the broad posting of the position(s) and a rigorous search process to find diverse, qualified candidates, or following the hiring practices of EHC.

The SWVA-HEALS administration includes a Director and Assistant Director who both hold current Post Graduate Professional licenses with endorsements in public school administration. Dual Enrollment teachers may have high school endorsement and/or college credentialing. These teachers are credentialed by the college providing the credit. The college credential process follows SACSCOC. Our partner divisions delivering courses will all meet the same requirements.

SWVA-HEALS Lab School is a partnership between Emory and Henry College, Virginia Highlands Community College, Wytheville Community College, Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, A. Linwood Holton Governor’s School and the school divisions of Bristol City, Smyth County, Washington County and Wythe County. The relationship between the school divisions and the colleges is critical to student success and access. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed between EMC and all partnering institutions.

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 SWVA-HEALS Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

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

The application received numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

VDOE may need to provide guidance on the implementation of the Best Practices Administration of Lotteries for College Partnership Laboratory School Admissions to ensure the recruitment process/program is open to all students.

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 \$3,850,000 in operational per-pupil funding support over a four-year period.

The funding from the Implementation Grant will combine with the in-kind funding that is provided by EMC, the SWVA Higher Education Center, and the four partnering school divisions. The two campuses that will house SWVA-HEALS students will provide the necessary classroom spaces, simulation labs, video-conferencing technology, study spaces, and access to other educational healthcare facilities.

During the first five years of the SWVA-HEALS program, the SWVA-HEALS administration, Emory and Henry College, and all other partners will leverage their strong donor relations and community support to create sustainable funding for the program. Connections to Ballad Health and the newly created Ballad Academy in East Tennessee, will be utilized to help build sustainability. Plans are in place to lobby the General Assembly to seek per pupil funding for College Partnership Laboratory Schools. The SWVA-HEALS Advisory Board consists of leaders in SWVA in the healthcare industry and in philanthropy. These individuals will assist the SWVA-HEALS program in obtaining financial support from regional health legacy foundations, other medical providers, and an active grant writing effort.

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 SWVA-HEALS Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

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PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received eight (8) public comments and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

VDOE may need to follow-up on the status of opportunities for additional grants and support from educational healthcare groups for post-grant financial sustainability.

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 close-out plans would follow the current agreements between EMC, the two community colleges and the four school divisions as identified in the MOUs and the SWVA-HEALS By-Laws. Article VIII of the SWVA-HEALS By-Laws defines the dissolution of SWVA-HEALS and details insolvency and voluntary dissolution.

The Standing Committee highly recommends the SWVA-HEALS 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
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PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received 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 SWVA-HEALS 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 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 Southwest Virginia Healthcare Excellence Academy Lab School (SWVA-HEALS) is designed as a healthcare focused career academy targeting 10th-12th grade students from Smyth, Wythe, and Washington Counties, and the City of Bristol. The SWVA-HEALS curriculum will increase high school students’ awareness of, interest in, and academic preparation for pursuing the educational pathways that lead to healthcare careers.

The national healthcare workforce shortages have been well documented and are prevalent across all healthcare disciplines and settings; however, these workforce shortages are even greater in the rural Appalachian regions of Southwest Virginia. The SWVA-HEALS program is specifically designed to create a “pipeline” for preparing future healthcare professionals to address the workforce shortages in Southwest Virginia.

The SWVA-HEALS program will include a special emphasis on increasing high school students’ awareness of, interest in, and preparation for pursuing the education pathways that lead to careers in areas that include but are not exclusive to medicine, nursing, mental and behavioral health, pharmacy, therapy and rehabilitation professions (i.e. athletic training, physical therapy,

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occupational therapy, speech language pathology), diagnostic professions (i.e. laboratory science, phlebotomy, radiology and imaging), and medical support professions, with the potential to include other areas of the healthcare industry in the near future. program will include a special emphasis on increasing high school students' awareness of, interest in, and preparation for pursuing the education pathways that lead to careers in areas that include but are not exclusive to medicine, nursing, mental and behavioral health, pharmacy, therapy and rehabilitation professions (i.e. athletic training, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language pathology), diagnostic professions (i.e. laboratory science, phlebotomy, radiology and imaging), and medical support professions, with the potential to include other areas of the healthcare industry in the near future.

With solid academic curriculum theory proposed and two state-of-the-art healthcare simulation labs planned, the Standing Committee highly recommends the Emory & Henry College 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 SWVA-HEALS Laboratory School to the Board.