



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Office of the Attorney General
Richmond 23219

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Joan Wodiska, Chair
Standing Committee on College Laboratory Partnership Schools
Board of Education

FROM: Deborah A. Love
Senior Assistant Attorney General

DATE: April 10, 2024 *DAL*

SUBJECT: Review of College Partnership Laboratory School Application:
George Mason University

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) has completed its review of the revised application to establish a college partnership laboratory school, received from George Mason University (version named "GMU Lab School Application for OAG Cover Sheet Review.docx"). An earlier version of this application was also reviewed by OAG, with feedback to the Department on March 21, and April 2. This confirms information I provided on April 3.

In my view, all comments made by OAG have been satisfactorily addressed. In my view, there are no legal impediments to the Standing Committee's consideration of this application. I note that my review does not embrace curricular considerations, the financial plan, or budgeting aspects of the proposal, nor do I offer any opinion as to the merits of the application. This assessment applies to the application reviewed, and not to any subsequent changes.

If you have any questions, please contact me at the address above, by telephone at (804)786-3807, or by electronic mail at dlove@oag.state.va.us.

cc: Dr. Lisa Coons, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Andy Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent of Strategic Innovation



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2120
RICHMOND, VA 23218-2120

College Partnership Laboratory School Standing Committee Members:

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) review committee, consisting of subject matter experts have reviewed the application and affirm that all required elements of the application, including the school's educational program, governance, management structure, financial plan (including sustainability plan), placement plan, and other assurances have been provided. Additional, specific review has been conducted by the agency's curriculum and policy teams.

More specifically, this application meets all needed requirements associated with the school's proposed curriculum and graduation requirements.

This application is complete and compliant.

Andrew Armstrong, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent of Strategic Innovation

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Jason Ellis, Director of Assessment

Jason Ellis

Digitally signed by Jason Ellis
Date: 2024.04.11 09:44:48 -04'00'

Melissa Velazquez, Assistant Superintendent of Policy and Government Relations

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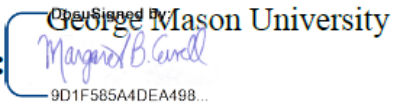
Samantha Hollins, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent, Department of Special Populations

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Virginia College Partnership Laboratory School Application

Approved by the Virginia Board of Education
July 26, 2012
Updated August 31, 2022

School Name: Accelerated College and Employability Skills (ACCESS) Academy
Date of Submission to Virginia Board of Education: August 11, 2023
Name of Authorized Official: Maggie Ewell
George Mason University
Signature of Authorized Official:

9D1F585A4DEA498...
October 6, 2023 - Revised
February 29, 2024 - Revised
March 25, 2024 - Revised

Instructions

All applicants for a college partnership laboratory school should read the College Partnership Laboratory School Application Process before completing the application. The process is available on the Virginia Department of Education's website at the following link:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/laboratory_schools/index.shtml.

Please complete the cover page and insert the name of the college partnership laboratory school into the footer before completing the application. Each gray section in the document must contain a response.

<mailto:labschools@doe.virginia.gov>: Completed applications and supporting documents must be submitted to labschools@doe.virginia.gov. The Department may return or reject applications that are incomplete.

Note: The *Virginia Freedom of Information Act* (FOIA), § [2.2-3700](#) et seq. of the *Code of Virginia*, guarantees citizens of the Commonwealth and representatives of the media access to public records held by public bodies, public officials, and public employees. Please be advised that documents submitted to the Virginia Department of Education are subject to FOIA and must be released in response to a FOIA request unless the records are exempt as specifically provided by law.

Part A: Applicant Information

School Information

School Name: George Mason University

Does the applicant presently have access to a facility suitable for a school? Yes No

If the answer is yes to the question above, insert address and information regarding ownership of the facility:

Northern Virginia Community College – Loudoun Campus
21200 Campus Drive, Sterling, VA 20164

School Location (City/Town and Zip Code): Sterling, VA 20164

Is the applicant a public, nonsectarian, nonreligious school in the Commonwealth established by a public institution of higher education; public higher education center, institute, or authority; or an eligible institution, as defined in § 23.1-628 related to the Tuition Assistance Grant Program? Yes

Proposed Opening Date (Date should be at least twelve (12) months from the date of this application.): 7/1/2025

Grades to be Served for the Full Term of the Contract (Please Check All That Apply)*			
Pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sixth Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seventh Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eighth Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>
Second Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ninth Grade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Third Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tenth Grade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fourth Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eleventh Grade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fifth Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	Twelfth Grade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

*If the college partnership laboratory school intends to add or change grade levels at some point during the school's operation, please provide this information in the education program section of the narrative.

If the college partnership laboratory school is going to have a specialized focus (e.g., Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics [STEM], at-risk students, special education, career and technical education, gifted education), please describe the focus:

The Accelerated College and Employability Skills (ACCESS) Academy, a lab school designed to support the transition of at-risk learners into college and high-demand careers, with a preliminary focus on Information Technology. In later years, after ACCESS Academy is established, the lab school will scale-up to partner with additional school division stakeholders and also expand to focus on educational and healthcare career pathways.

If the college partnership laboratory school is going to be in partnership with a local school division, please describe the partnership briefly.

ACCESS Academy is a collaborative partnership between George Mason University (Mason), Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), and Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS). This partnership will extend multi-institutional pathways from high schools to both NOVA and Mason, leveraging existing proven programs such as ADVANCE and wraparound services such as academic advising, success coaching, writing support, and career coaching among other services to reduce the administrative and financial burden associated with college. In addition, ACCESS Academy will incorporate employability skills, innovative teaching and learning methods, and experiences co-designed with industry partners, researchers, and instructional faculty.

Contact Information

Name of Individual/Organization Submitting Application: **George Mason University**

Name of Contact Person for Application: **Ingrid Guerra López, Ph.D.**

Title/Affiliation with Individual/Organization Submitting Application: **Dean, College of Education and Human Development**

Office Telephone: **703-993-2004** Mobile Telephone: **248-910-6116**

Fax Number: **703-993-2001** E-mail Address: **iguerral@gmu.edu**

Prior Experience

1. Has the applicant had any prior experience operating a college partnership laboratory school or similar school?
Please check one of the following: Yes No
2. If the response to the question above is “yes,” please describe any prior experience with establishing and operating college partnership laboratory schools and/or similar schools. Please provide information such as the name of the school, the state where it is located, years of operation, and contact information. If the school is no longer operating, please provide the reason(s) for closure:

n/a

3. Please describe the relevant experience of the members of the governing board:

The **Governing** Board for ACCESS Academy includes the Dean of George Mason’s College of Education and Human Development, the Chief Academic Officer of Northern Virginia Community College and the Superintendent of Loudoun County Public Schools. Additional board members will include business/industry representative or chamber stakeholders, parent representatives, and community representatives. **The primary role of the Governing Board is to ensure the effective**

operation and oversight of the lab school. The Dean of George Mason's College of Education and Human Development will report to VDOE. Biographical information of those affiliated with George Mason, Northern Virginia Community College, and Loudoun County Public Schools will be provided in the Governance section of the application. The other board members will be selected once the lab school is approved.

Contact Information – Institution of Higher Education Partner

Name of Contact Person for Application: Ingrid Guerra-López

Title/Affiliation with the Institution of Higher Education: Dean, College of Education and Human Development, George Mason University

Office Telephone: **703-993-2004** Cell Telephone: **248-910-6116**

Fax Number: **702-993-2001** E-mail Address: **iguerral@gmu.edu**

Part B: Narrative

The application narrative must contain all of the elements in § [22.1-349.5](#) of the *Code of Virginia*.

- I. **Executive Summary:** Provide an executive summary that addresses the need for the college partnership laboratory school and its goals and objectives. (The suggested length is two pages.)

Need and Purpose

In today's fast-paced world, technological advancements are transforming industries at an unprecedented rate. The decisions we make now will shape the future of our students, impacting their ability to thrive in an ever-changing landscape. As technology continues to evolve, we have a unique opportunity to harness its power, unlocking the full potential of our students and providing them with access to high-demand, well-compensated careers. ACCESS Academy recognizes the urgent need for transformative education to empower at-risk students. By offering innovative pathways that lead to high-demand careers, alongside certificates and college degrees, we are paving the way for a brighter future.

The Challenge: Many at-risk students face several barriers on their journey to a college education and high-demand careers. Limited financial resources can make it difficult to afford college tuition and related expenses, as well as create a critical need to work to help sustain themselves and their families. Insufficient access to academic and career advising, tutoring, counseling, and awareness of financial support can also hinder academic progress and career advancement. Finally, limited support networks can make it challenging for students to find mentors and allies to help them effectively navigate the rapidly evolving workplace, particularly in high-demand, technology careers.

The Solution: ACCESS Academy is our response to these pressing challenges. We are committed to delivering robust, innovative, and transformative educational experiences that provide clear pathways to high-demand careers. By reducing administrative and financial burdens on students and their families, we are leveling the playing field and giving our students the chance they deserve. Our unique blend of problem-based learning, employability skills, and real-world experience with industry partners ensures that ACCESS Academy students are not only well-prepared but also in high demand within the information technology field and other critical industries.

Scaling Up Impact: Our vision extends beyond just the IT field. ACCESS Academy is the first step towards establishing a regional consortium, partnering with school divisions across Region IV to scale up our success in information technology careers, as well as replicate the success with other high-demand careers such as those in education and healthcare. We aim to innovate and deeply transform the way we prepare students for high-demand careers, shaping a better future for students, their families, and the entire region.

Goals and Objectives

ACCESS Academy aims to alleviate the administrative and financial costs associated with preparing students for high-demand careers. With multiple pathways and on/off ramps to support student access and workforce readiness for high-demand careers in software development, cyber security, data management, and networking in the Information Technology field, ACCESS Academy will utilize 1)

wraparound support, 2) innovative teaching and learning methods, 3) transdisciplinary collaboration, and a 4) learn and earn approach, alongside an assets-based approach to students' strengths and funds of knowledge to create college and employment opportunities.

ACCESS Academy has developed the following goals:

- To develop problem-based learning (PBL) and employability skills in ACCESS Academy students;
- To build wraparound services that will reduce the administrative and financial burden connected to college admissions for students and families;
- To provide dual enrollment and IT course credits to students;
- To create pathways for students to earn micro-credentials and industry certificates while they work in IT-related fields; and
- To implement a professional learning and technical support program for teachers centered on PBL and employability skills.

ACCESS Academy also has the following objectives:

- ACCESS graduates will have higher self-efficacy in their IT and employability skills;
- ACCESS wraparound services will allow students to reduce the administrative and financial burden of navigating the college admissions process;
- ACCESS Academy 11th and 12th grade students will earn 15-30 dual enrollment and IT course credits while being enrolled in 2- or 4-year degrees while working in IT-related fields;
- ACCESS graduates will earn micro-credentials and industry certificates;
- ACCESS graduates will earn 2- and 4-year degrees;
- ACCESS graduates will increase their earning potential;
- Employers will find ACCESS Academy graduates well-prepared for IT careers; and
- ACCESS teachers will be competent in innovative teaching methods, specifically PBL and employability skills.

Summary of Instructional Plan

ACCESS Academy is built upon four key elements aimed at ensuring effectiveness and student success: wraparound support, innovative teaching and learning methods, transdisciplinary collaboration, and a learn-and-earn model. The Academy will be housed in Loudoun County, but open to any student in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Students will be exposed to service-learning opportunities, paid work-based learning experiences, and immersive campus experiences at FUSE at Mason Square, all facilitated by innovative teaching and learning methods. ACCESS Academy's approach to teaching is anchored in a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) framework to provide students with a toolkit that will prepare them to succeed in rapidly evolving fields. To assist students, wraparound services include a range of comprehensive support initiatives designed to equip students with the most forward-looking tech career coaching, near-peer mentoring, academic advising, transportation assistance, and more.

ACCESS Academy is intentionally designed with direct student on-ramps in 11th, and 12th grades, and phased in lab school preparation during 9th and 10th grades. Students in grades 9 and 10 will focus on completion of high school graduation requirements including English, social studies, math, and science. They will begin to develop employability skills through teaching, learning, and curriculum innovations that leverage other existing programs in students' base schools and **will be introduced to**

problem-based learning through focused activities that include guided practice and support the development of problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, systems thinking, and research skills.

Students in grades 11 and 12 will be provided with a learning environment rich in problem-based learning activities and high-quality work-based learning experiences developed with industry partners. Students will have access to industry-based internships and service learning in local middle and elementary schools to promote the application of content area and employability skills. This exposure will help these students not only apply innovative problem-based instructional approaches and develop transferable skills such as critical thinking, communication skills, and information literacy, but also increase dual enrollment credits and/or industry certifications earned by graduating seniors. Academy students may also have opportunities to pursue additional dual enrollment, elective, other advanced academic opportunities, and/or an advanced diploma. Potential off ramps for students might include coursework that leads to an AS or BS degree, career certifications, micro-credentials, or a job. In addition to developing a program for students, a professional development and technical support program will be developed for teachers.

ACCESS Academy places strong emphasis on transdisciplinary collaboration, highlighting the significance of leveraging diverse expertise in the design and delivery of curriculum. Therefore, a pedagogical partnership among faculty in Mason's College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) and NOVA's Department of Education, faculty in STEM and Information Sciences and Technology at Mason, NOVA, school divisions, and business and industry partners will be established so that the ACCESS Academy represents a replicable model school that can serve as a hub for exposing students to a variety of hands-on, experiential learning opportunities.

Mason will also leverage their state-of-the-art infrastructure where researchers and industry partners are working side by side with ACCESS students to establish a Learning Innovation Lab, where teaching and learning innovations will be observed, evaluated, improved, and shared to support scalability. It will become a training ground for innovative teaching practices for current and future educators as teacher candidates, in-service teachers, and Information Technology faculty to develop skills in PBL approaches. Mason's teacher preparation programs will be able to conduct observations and field experiences. Robust professional development and technical assistance related to best practices in STEM instruction, experiential learning, and problem-based learning will be provided so that instructors will employ innovative approaches to teaching in the lab school IT classes.

Sustainability

ACCESS Academy's sustainability will be supported by a multifaceted approach to ensure effectiveness and long-term success. First, strong engagement among Mason, LCPS, NOVA, other school divisions, and industry partners will be continually nurtured to provide a sustainable network of support, resources, and expertise to continually enhance the Academy's offerings and opportunities. Second, the Academy will also engage in continuous program evaluation, implementing a rigorous system for ongoing program assessment and improvement. Regular evaluations will help identify areas where the Academy can adapt to changing educational and industry needs, ensuring its continued relevance and effectiveness. Third, a diversified funding strategy will be developed, including grants, corporate sponsorships, and community support to reduce dependence on any single source of funding. This financial stability will be vital for the long-term sustainability of the Academy. Fourth, ACCESS Academy will continue to invest in ongoing professional development for educators involved in the Academy. This will ensure that teaching

practices remain cutting-edge and aligned with industry demands, which is crucial for maintaining the Academy's track record of excellence. Fifth, we will develop a scalable model that can be replicated in other regions, allowing for the expansion of ACCESS Academy's impact. This will not only enhance the sustainability of the Academy, but also increase its reach and influence. Sixth, ACCESS Academy will foster a strong sense of community among ACCESS Academy alumni and their families. Engaged graduates and supportive community can play a significant role in sustaining the academy by sharing their success stories and advocating for its mission. Lastly, we will use data and feedback from students, industry partners, and educators to inform program enhancements and strategic decisions. This data-driven approach will help ensure that ACCESS Academy remains responsive to the evolving needs of at-risk students and the job market.

In summary, ACCESS Academy represents a model school that empowers high school students to pursue high-demand careers (first in information technology, and later in education, health, and other high-demand fields) by offering various accessible pathways designed considering the needs of students. ACCESS Academy's approach to create pathways to advanced education centers on offering innovative, problem-based learning experiences, forging strong pedagogical partnerships, providing a wealth of hands-on, experiential learning opportunities, and reducing administrative and financial barriers on students and parents. The Academy has the ultimate goal of increasing access to high-demand careers in key industries and improving workforce readiness for at-risk students by offering a range of pathways, including transition to workforce after graduating from high school, two- and four-year degrees, and advanced degrees.

II. Mission and Vision: State the mission and vision of the proposed college partnership laboratory school, including identification of the targeted student population, must be included. The following components must be addressed:

1. A description of the college partnership laboratory school's mission and vision and how it is consistent with the *Virginia Standards of Quality* (SOQ), the *Virginia Standards of Learning* (SOL), and the *Virginia Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA). (See § [22.1-349.3](#) of the *Code of Virginia*.)

The vision of ACCESS Academy is to prepare adaptable lifelong learners that collaboratively and creatively solve complex problems in any setting, as technologies, the nature of work, workers, and the workplace evolve over time.

The mission of ACCESS Academy is to provide new innovative pathways for at-risk students toward high-demand, well-compensated careers, while simultaneously working toward two- and four-year degrees to maximize their earning potential over their work life.

Both the mission and vision of ACCESS Academy is consistent with the Virginia Standards of Quality (SOQ) and the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs). The school will foster competency-based career and technical education programs that integrate academic outcomes, career guidance, and job seeking skills. The educational program is based upon labor market needs and career guidance will include counseling about available employment opportunities and placement services.

The lab school mission and vision are also aligned with all three collaborative partners' strategic plans. It is aligned with the Loudoun County Public Schools Strategic Plan (ONE LCPS 2027:

Strategic Plan for Excellence), Goal 1, Empowered Students – Action 1.2 Multiple, Accessible Pathways to Success: LCPS will **expand student access to participate in specialized educational opportunities**. George Mason University’s 2023 Strategic Plan is aligned through Strategic Action 3.2.2.c: Establish and **execute a plan to enhance K-12 outreach** (e.g., Governor’s School, **lab schools**, other college specific programs, dual enrollment, etc.) and engagement activities. Northern Virginia Community College’s **2023-26** Strategic Plan is aligned through Goal 1: Access: By 2026, 24,356 **students enrolled in the highest-earning pathways, both for workforce and transfer**.

2. A description of any specific area of academic concentration.

ACCESS Academy will provide students with high school and dual enrollment core curriculum coursework and specialized problem-based learning IT coursework that will prepare them to pursue high-demand careers in computing sciences. Coursework is consistent with Virginia Standards of Quality and aligned to the Virginia Standards of Learning. Courses are further aligned to the LCPS Portrait of a Graduate and the Virginia Department of Education’s Profile of a Virginia Graduate.

3. The college partnership laboratory school’s core philosophy.

ACCESS Academy provides a robust, innovative, and transformative educational experience to at-risk students, who have not historically had access to opportunities and pathways that meet their needs and lead to high-demand and well compensated career opportunities, as they simultaneously work toward two- and four-year college degrees. With multiple pathways and on/off ramps to support student access and workforce readiness for high-demand careers in the Information Technology field, ACCESS Academy utilizes 1) wraparound support, 2) innovative teaching and learning methods, 3) transdisciplinary collaboration, and a 4) learn-and-earn approach, alongside an assets-based approach to students’ strengths and funds of knowledge to create college and employment opportunities. ACCESS Academy’s approach to teaching is anchored in a problem-based learning (PBL) framework and essential employability skills to provide students with a skillset that will prepare them to succeed in a rapidly evolving workplace and society.

4. Information about the college partnership laboratory school’s targeted student population.

ACCESS Academy will serve at-risk students in **grades 9-12**. ACCESS Academy **will include a total of 120 students from grade 9 – 12 (n=30 for each grade)**.

ACCESS Academy plans to use a lottery process for admission with students submitting their interest through a lottery application. The lab school will be open to any student who resides in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The only prerequisite to apply would be **completion of the VDOE recommended coursework for each grade level**. The lottery process will include multiple rounds of offers until program capacity is confirmed, with parents/guardians and students being given approximately two weeks to decide prior to subsequent lottery offers being issued.

Table 1

Proposed Enrollment of Students for ACCESS Academy 2025-2029

	Total N of Students	
	Grade	#
Year 1 (2025-26)	9 th	30
	10 th	30
	11 th	30
	12 th	30
Year 2 (2026-27)	9 th	30
	10 th	30
	11 th	30
	12 th	30
Year 3 (2027-28)	9 th	30
	10 th	30
	11 th	30
	12 th	30
Year 4 (2028-29)	9 th	30
	10 th	30
	11 th	30
	12 th	30

III. Educational Program: State the goals and objectives to be achieved by the college partnership laboratory school, which must meet or exceed the SOL. The following components must be addressed:

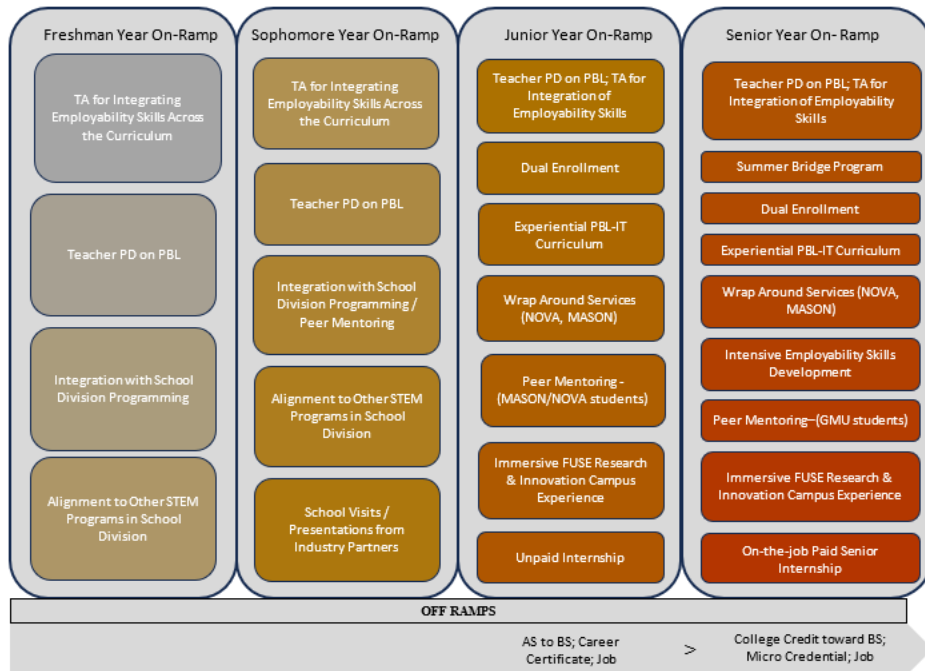
1. A description of the college partnership laboratory school’s academic program and how it is aligned with state standards.

ACCESS Academy is planned for a grades 9-12 academic program. Students in grades 9 and 10 will pursue graduation requirements including English, social studies, math, science, and others as they prepare to start dual enrollment and specialized IT courses in grade 11. All graduation required courses are aligned to the Standards of Learning, meet the Standards of Quality, and fulfill the VDOE requirements for the Standard Diploma. Furthermore, students may also have the opportunity to pursue additional dual enrollment, elective, other advanced academic opportunities, and/or an Advanced Diploma.

Students will have access to different on and off ramps for ACCESS Academy. Potential off ramps might include coursework that leads to an AS or BS degree, career certifications, micro-credentials, or a job. Additionally, employability skills are integrated across the curriculum at all grade levels, there is integration with AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), CAMPUS (<https://www.lcps.org/CAMPUS>) and peer mentoring, and alignment to other STEM programs in the school division. A full breakdown of on and off ramps is below.

Figure 1

Proposed On and Off Ramps - Freshman Year through Senior Year



Core subject teachers in grades 9 and 10 will receive professional learning regarding instructional strategies used in problem-based learning so that they can be integrated into 9th and 10th grade curricula. The goal is to build student critical thinking, reflection, problem-solving, collaboration, and research skills to prepare for transdisciplinary learning in the innovative teaching proposed in the lab school and develop college and career readiness. Teachers will be provided with technical assistance for integrating employability skills into the curriculum. **Students in grades 9 and 10 will be introduced to problem-based learning through mini lessons, real-world scenarios, and focused activities that include guided practice and support the development of problem-solving, collaboration, communication, systems thinking, and research skills.**

In grade 11, students attending ACCESS Academy will pursue their **VDOE graduation requirements** as dual enrollment offerings in collaboration with Northern Virginia Community College. Students will take dual enrollment coursework in English, social studies, math, and science earning up to 13 college credits for those courses in the junior year. Students will also take innovative PBL IT coursework, which will be designed with a problem-based learning approach, in collaboration with industry partners. Students can earn an additional nine credits in that discipline. Faculty at Northern Virginia Community College will teach the junior year dual enrollment and PBL IT coursework.

In grade 12, students attending ACCESS Academy will continue dual enrollment coursework for English and government, the last remaining **VDOE** graduation requirements. They will also continue their PBL IT curriculum. Grade 12 students will also engage in immersive experiential learning at Fuse at Mason Square (<https://construction.gmu.edu/fuse-mason-square>), an innovative space that will house a combination of research and development, education programs, incubators, and technology labs. Students will be able to work side-by-side with researchers, student mentors, and

industry partners in a technology incubator setting. They will also pursue a paid internship with industry partners and complete a senior design course as part of the lab school program. Students will work with external organizations to develop technical solutions or assess and propose innovative ways to enhance their current services. Faculty at Northern Virginia Community College will teach the senior year dual enrollment coursework while faculty at George Mason University will teach the PBL IT coursework.

George Mason University's team will work closely with external entities to scaffold levels of problem complexity into their learning experience to strike the right balance between the students' knowledge and capabilities and the organization's expectations. A few examples of projects that students will deliver may include creating a dashboard to help track successful marketing tactics, creating a website for startups, creating an interactive virtual tour experience, creating a series of visualizations to track the firm's policies and their impact on employees, analyzing and reporting on a company's website traffic and marketing strategies, assessing data and providing guidance on appropriate interventions, and creating mobile apps for keeping the community together. During the senior year, students can earn six possible credits for dual enrollment and up to 15 for the PBL IT courses.

While attending ACCESS, all students will be offered wraparound support including the most forward-looking tech career coaching, near peer mentoring, academic advising, writing and language support, disability services liaising (if needed), general guidance about resources, and transportation. Students will also be offered transition support for their completion of ACCESS Academy. The school intends to develop a learn and earn model that includes college credit, industry certifications, and competency-based micro-credentialing with multiple on and off ramps to facilitate continued student academic and career advancement, as well as income earning opportunities. At the present time we are not seeking a seat time waiver, though that will be explored as part of the competency-based educational approach.

2. An overview of the curriculum and teaching methods to be used at the college partnership laboratory school and a description of the learning environment and instructional strategies to be used at the college partnership laboratory school, including scientifically research-based instructional strategies to ensure that student engagement and achievement are occurring.

ACCESS Academy will transform teaching and learning in information technology and computing science coursework by integrating problem-based learning (PBL) approaches and activities (Shaklee & Horak, 2014; Horak & Shaklee, 2019). Problem-based learning immerses teachers and students together in a cognitive apprenticeship (Collins & Kapur, 2015) that develops critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills through an ill-structured narrative that is based on real scenarios. Although similar to project-based learning, problem-based learning not only promotes active learning in students, but also allows students to connect experiences in the classroom with real-time industry conditions while developing content and employability skills. Students develop knowledge while working through the problem and the focus is on self-directed inquiry to inform decision making.

Coursework will be transdisciplinary with real-world experiences from industry partners integrated into PBL environments and scenarios so that students can connect experiences in the classroom with real-time industry conditions. Learning experiences will be scaffolded so that students attending ACCESS Academy build problem-solving skills and increase the level of complexity each year. Students will also develop and build employability skills as noted in the Top 15 Skills for Employers 2025 (World Economic Forum, 2020). These skills include among others: critical thinking and

analysis, technology design and programming, reasoning, problem-solving, and ideation, and systems analysis and evaluation.

Problem-based learning is well-suited for the ACCESS Academy as it teaches students “what questions to ask, how to make predictions from theories, and how theories and rules can be tested” (Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006, p. 4). Additionally, Knuth et al. (2016) found that students who consistently engage in PBL activities have increased enrollment and pass rates in rigorous coursework. Students who participate in PBL activities also demonstrate longer retention (Diggs, 1997) and have more learning gains on measures of conceptual reasoning (Tarhan & Acar-Sesen, 2013) and build data literacy skills (Swan et al., 2013).

At ACCESS Academy, we will adopt problem-based learning methodology in our IT coursework. Problems will be developed throughout the courses in collaboration with industry partners in such a way so that students will be able to integrate and apply knowledge from different disciplines. This allows students to see connections among disciplines and promotes carryover of knowledge from one discipline to another. In this way, problem-based learning facilitates adaptability across disciplines and contexts since students are exposed to a problem that requires them to integrate a range of disciplines and principles to solve the problem. As coursework is completed through tasks, case studies, and real-world scenarios and experiences, the curriculum becomes transdisciplinary in nature since students start from a given problem that is designed in collaboration with employers, researchers, and instructors.

A positive element of problem-based learning is the high degree of social, communication, and cooperation skills among students—skills that are in high demand by employers.

3. A plan for using internal and external assessments to measure and report student progress in accordance with the SOL.

Students at ACCESS Academy will be held to the same graduation requirements including SOL testing, as peers not attending ACCESS Academy. Additionally, reports of student progress will be conveyed to the Virginia Department of Education by the **home school division** in partnership with the ACCESS Academy Director.

4. A description of plans for identifying, evaluating, and successfully serving students with disabilities, students who are English Language Learners, students who are academically behind, and gifted students. Such plans must comply with applicable laws and regulations.

Students at ACCESS Academy will retain their home school status. The lab school will work in consultation with **the home school division** and other officials to ensure that students with disabilities, students who are English Language Learners, students who need academic support, and gifted students receive the services outlined in their IEPs, Language Instruction Educational Program, Section 504 plan, and any academic improvement plan agreed upon by the student, family, and district officials. As students will be concurrently enrolled at Mason and NOVA while attending ACCESS Academy, students with documented special educational needs from the P-12 environment will need to submit their documentation to Mason’s Office of Disability Services (<https://ds.gmu.edu/>) and NOVA’s Office of Accommodations and Accessibility Services (<https://www.nvcc.edu/accommodations/index.html>). Each office will review the documentation and ensure all previously approved accommodations will be supported in collaboration with the ACCESS Academy Director. Mason and NOVA faculty teaching dual enrollment and/or PBL IT coursework

will be provided with student disability and accommodation plans by the institutional office where the class resides. That office will also serve as the point of contact for ACCESS Academy faculty regarding student services, support, and accommodations while they attend ACCESS Academy. For students that are minors, parent/guardian support may be utilized via a FERPA waiver.

Also, Mason serves as the home base for the VDOE Region 4 Technical Training and Assistance Center (TTAC) which provides support, professional development, and technical assistance to teachers across Northern Virginia to improve learning outcomes for students with disabilities. As a division in Region IV, LCPS broadly, and ACCESS Academy specifically, have access to the resources provided through TTAC. This includes materials for ACCESS Academy teachers such as professional resources on evidence-based strategies and foundational knowledge and skills, as well as professional learning communities to support teachers' ongoing professional development—all of which prepares teachers to support students with disabilities in the classroom. For example, TTAC provides training on 22 high-leverage practices (HLPs) identified by the CEEDAR Center as essential for building capacity in schools to support students with disabilities in accessing the general curriculum. While designated as effective practices for special education teachers and students, high leverage practices are appropriate and effective improving outcomes for all learners. The 22 HLPs are applicable to any content area and are organized into four categories: collaboration, assessment, social/emotional/behavioral, and instruction. Teachers at ACCESS Academy, regardless of the degree to which they support students with disabilities **and the school division they represent**, will participate in HLP professional development and use the resources of TTAC to enhance instruction for all.

5. An explanation of the procedures for corrective actions needed in the event that pupil performance at the college partnership laboratory school falls below the standards outlined in the SOA. (See [Part VIII of the SOA](#).)

ACCESS Academy will implement the standards by which the Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports are in alignment across the Commonwealth. Additionally, the lab school will work closely in consultation with **school division** administration, teachers, and staff to implement Response to Intervention (RtI) as an approach to identify and address students who may struggle with literacy and mathematics. These interventions are in addition to providing professional development for teachers and instructional teams on PBL. The lab school believes that all students can learn and that the entire learning community is essential to support students who might need more support to meet standards.

6. Information regarding the minimum and maximum enrollment per grade for the full term of the contract as well as class size and structure for each grade. (See § [22.1-253.13:2](#) of the *Code of Virginia*.)

For academic year 2025-26, the goal is to enroll 30 students each for the grades 9-12 (total n=120). It is possible that enrollment per grade level can vary per year since ACCESS Academy will be a school of choice for families. Students who un-enroll will be replaced by a student on the waitlist at midyear or the beginning of the academic year. Further, enrollment may be adjusted by the addition of other school district partners and/or other sites.

7. The proposed calendar and sample daily schedule.

Coursework for the ACCESS Academy would be aligned with the current Loudoun County Public Schools calendar. Courses taken as part of **VDOE** graduation requirements or to fulfill the UCGS will be taken in cooperation with Northern Virginia Community College.

Figure 2

ACCESS Academy Draft Calendar 2025-2026 (Aligned with Loudoun County Public Schools)



Below is a potential daily schedule for students enrolled in ACCESS Academy. ACCESS students will attend the lab school for the entire day.

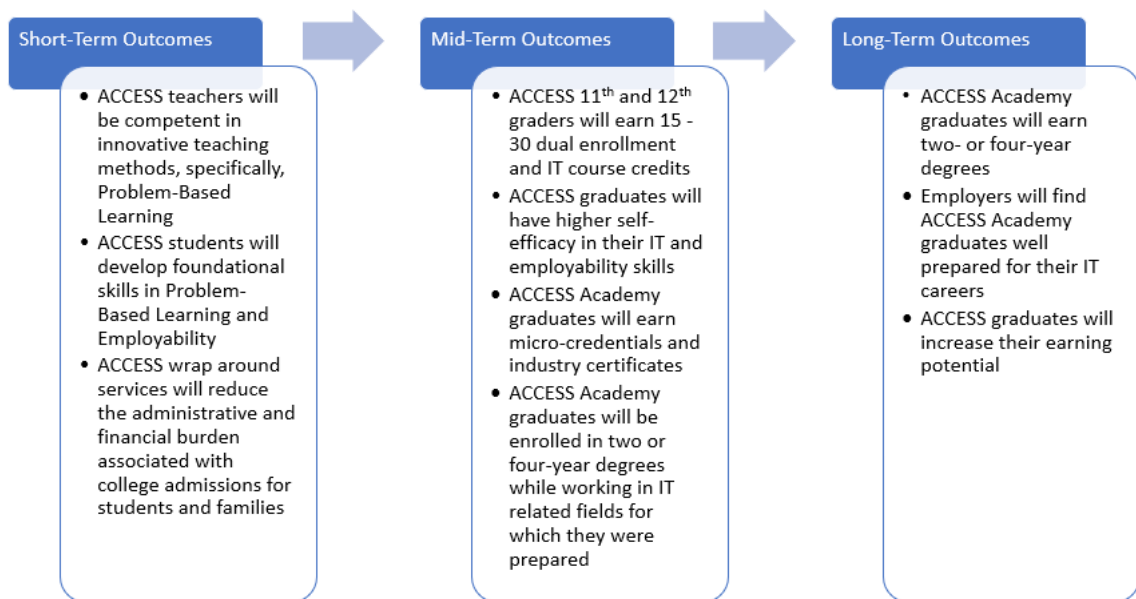
BLOCK	START TIME	END TIME
1 st / 5 th	9:30 am	10:59 am
2 nd / 6 th (lunch block)	11:11 am	1:10 pm
3 rd / 7 th	1:15 pm	2:44 pm
4 th / 8 th	2:49 pm	4:18 pm

- A description of the performance-based goals and related measurable educational objectives to be achieved by the school. (See § 22.1-253.13:1 B of the Code of Virginia.)

The performance-based goals and outcomes of ACCESS Academy are in alignment with § 22.1-253.13:1, and the Standards of Learning will be measured and assessed. Programming has been designed with short-term, mid-term, and long-term outcomes as defined below. These outcomes will be measured through both formative and summative evaluations which will be used to ensure effective design, development, implementation, as well continually improve as we work on a scalable model.

Figure 3

Performance-Based Goals and Outcomes



- For each grade or course in the college partnership laboratory school, please provide a detailed description of how the SOL and the corresponding SOL Curriculum Framework will be used as the foundation for curricula to be implemented. Include within the description how the goals and objectives of the curricula will meet or exceed the SOL, address student performance standards,

relate to state and federal assessment standards, and include measurable student outcomes. (See <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/index.shtml> on the Department’s website for more information about the SOL.)

ACCESS Academy students in grades 9 and 10 will focus on completion of high school graduation requirements and begin to develop employability skills through teaching, learning, and curriculum innovations that leverage existing programs in the student’s base school. The core curriculum design will include activities that provide an opportunity to practice and continue to develop employability skills and 9th and 10th graders will build the foundation to succeed during 11th and 12th grade of the lab school, in turn developing college and career readiness. Courses have been aligned with **VDOE graduation requirements and the collaborating division’s** Program of Studies. An alignment to the Virginia Standards of Learning and relevant curriculum frameworks is provided below.

Table 2

Alignment of Courses to Standards of Learning/Frameworks

Lab School Subject	Standard of Learning & Curriculum Frameworks	Courses Covered
English	https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/english-reading-literacy/standards-of-learning	English 9-12
Social Studies	https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/history-and-social-science/standards-of-learning	World History & Geography to 1500 Virginia & US History Virginia & US Government
Math	https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/mathematics/standards-of-learning/2023-mathematics-sol	Algebra 1 Algebra 2 Geometry
Science	https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/science/standards-of-learning	Biology Chemistry Physics Earth Science
Economics & Personal Finance	https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/instruction/economics-personal-finance	Economics & Personal Finance
Physical Education	https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/instruction/physical-education	Physical Education Grades 9 & 10

World Language	https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/world-language/standards-of-learning	American Sign Language French German Latin Mandarin Chinese Russian Spanish
Fine Arts	https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/instruction/fine-arts	Visual Arts Music Theatre Arts
Career & Technical Education	https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/instruction/computer-science	Computer Science Foundations Computer Science Principles Computer Science Programming

In addition to the coursework listed above, students will take innovative PBL-IT coursework during the 11th and 12th grades. Problem-based learning scenarios constructed in collaboration with industry partners will be woven through each course allowing students to build employability and technical skills, fostering collaboration, communication, problem solving, reflection, flexibility, and leadership. Students will solve real-world problems and address real-world workplace conditions. A sampling of these courses is provided below.

Discrete Structures - This course introduces high-level program design and discrete structures. It focuses on problem solving supporting abstraction and modeling providing the foundation needed for programming and Python. Students also learn probability and algorithms.

Introductory Calculus with Business Applications - This course provides a firm understanding of introductory calculus with a view towards applications in business and other disciplines. Students will learn how to interpret quantitative information and use appropriate algebraic, arithmetic and/or statistical methods to solve a problem.

Introduction to Computing - This course introduces students to basic computer concepts in hardware, software, networking, computer security, programming, databases, e-commerce, and decision-support systems. Students also examine social, legal, and ethical issues including privacy, intellectual property, health concerns, green computing, and accessibility. Hands-on activities include spreadsheets, databases, presentations, HTML 5, CSS, cybersecurity, blogs, wiki, and mobile app development.

IT Architecture Fundamentals - This course focuses on fundamental hardware and software concepts of information technology. Students will learn a computer systems' essential components, component interdependence, and binary functions, factoring in performance data communication models, telecommunication basics, and information security. Recent trends and advancements in mobile computing, telecommunications and IT infrastructures are also explored.

Multimedia and Web Design - This course focuses on the design and development of attractive and accessible websites with multimedia components. Students will be introduced and discussed technological, aesthetic, and human factors.

Database Fundamentals - This course covers relational database management systems and their use in business environments. Topics include database classifications, data models, normalization, and Structured Query Language (SQL) programming. Students will design and implement a real-world relational database and create SQL complex queries to retrieve data.

Information Security Fundamentals – This course covers information security and discusses the need for organizational policy to define required services such as confidentiality, authentication, integrity, nonrepudiation, access control, and availability, and mechanisms to implement those services. It also covers different types of security including physical security, computer security, and network security, common threats to and attacks against information systems, including accidental damage, identity theft, malicious software, "spam", and defensive measures.

Senior Design and Internship – This course will provide students with the opportunity to work on a capstone design project that will bring together the knowledge learned in the lab school experience. Students will also engage with industry partners through a paid internship and industry partners will assist students with their capstone projects.

The above courses prepare students to apply IT to support business processes. Graduates will have strong problem-solving, communication, and writing skills and can compete for technical employment or complete advanced study. The BSIT is accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET (<https://www.abet.org/>).

10. A description of the school’s assessment plan to obtain student performance data, which would include how these data will be used to monitor and improve achievement and how program effectiveness will be measured. The applicant must also provide benchmark data for how student achievement will be measured over a specified period of time. The applicant must address how these data will be established and documented in the first year of operation and how the data will be measured over the successive four-year period before the contract of such school is renewed by the Board. The benchmark data should address targets for student improvement to be met in each year.

Assessments for ACCESS Academy will be aligned with VDOE guidelines and be developed with the intention to provide benchmark data for student progress and to monitor progress over time. Performance assessments may serve as both a formative and summative means of determining student mastery of content and skills. As performance assessments are developed, ACCESS Academy will use the Quality Criteria Tool offered by VDOE to ensure that assessments enhance instruction, promote deeper learning of content and skills, and foster student development of the 5 C’s outlined in the Profile of a Virginia Graduate. The ACCESS Academy Director will be responsible for establishing benchmark data for student achievement and developing a process for documentation during the first year of operation and will continue to monitor the data over each subsequent year.

Student achievement and success will be documented and measured in various ways, including the following:

- GPA data for lab school coursework
- Number of standard and advanced diplomas
- Feedback from industry partners
- Performance on industry certification examinations
- Attainment of industry certificates and micro-credentials
- Performance on SOL examinations
- Student satisfaction/graduation surveys
- Pre-and post-student engagement and motivation surveys (AES/SEM, Reeve, 2013; Reeve & Lee, 2013)
- Job placement information

Opportunities will be provided to include students in the assessment process by providing opportunities for faculty/teachers and students to collaboratively examine and reflect on student progress over time. Students will be encouraged to develop metacognitive skills and set learning goals and targets. Additionally, coursework will be connected to real-world scenarios and student career goals.

11. A description of any assessment other than the SOL that may be used to measure progress during the academic year.

Student learning at the ACCESS Academy will be transdisciplinary. Assessments to measure progress will be derived from multiple data points and may include the following:

- Student projects (formative/summative)
- Student writing (formative/summative)
- Anecdotal notes (formative)
- Teacher-designed student assessments
- Student grades
- AP test scores
- IB test scores
- Industry certifications
- Micro-credentials

The following components should be addressed if applicable to the college partnership laboratory school:

12. A detailed description of any alternative accreditation plan, in accordance with the SOA ([8VAC20-131-420](#)), for which the college partnership laboratory school will request approval from the Board.

At the present time, there is no plan to request alternative accreditation for the ACCESS Academy. Mason and NOVA will continue to follow SACS-COC accreditation guidelines.

13. A general description of any incentives/partnerships that the college partnership laboratory school intends to have with school divisions to enhance both the

educational program of the college partnership laboratory school and the partnering school division(s).

ACCESS Academy is a collaborative effort between George Mason University (Mason), Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), and Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS). Additionally, the lab school will engage in partnerships with business and industry to provide expertise, mentoring, and internships to students enrolled in lab school programs. Regional representatives from companies including Google, Amazon Web Services, Microsoft, Northrop Grumman, Intel, Leidos, Verizon, and others have been engaged in the planning process to determine their level of interest and possible collaboration opportunities.

Students in the 11th grade will have opportunities to enroll in dual enrollment programs through NOVA. They will also have the opportunity to earn job experience through unpaid internships. Students in the 12th grade will also have dual enrollment opportunities through NOVA but will get on the job experience through paid internships.

Teachers who participate in professional development and engage through technical assistance to develop problem-based learning skills and curriculum will receive stipends and possible micro-credentials.

14. If the college partnership laboratory school plans to use virtual learning in its educational program, a description of how virtual learning will be used and estimates of how many students will participate.

Although virtual learning is not a defining feature of the proposed lab school project, students will not be restricted from pursuing any virtual learning opportunities offered either at the school site, through **their home school division**, or through Northern Virginia Community College or **George Mason University**.

IV. Governance: The following components must be addressed:

1. Background information on the proposed founding governing board members and, if identified, the proposed school leadership and management team. (*See § 22.1-299.2 B of the Code of Virginia.*)

The Governing Board will represent the voice of a range of stakeholders including members of the community, industry, and parents. It will be comprised of two parent members who will be appointed by the Loudoun County School Board, in addition to two industry or chamber representatives and two community representatives, which will be appointed by George Mason University in consultation with Northern Virginia Community College and LCPS.

The Governing Board will also include institutional partner representative from Mason, NOVA, and LCPS, and the ACCESS Academy Director. The institutional partner representatives are:

Mason Representative: Dr. Ingrid Guerra-López, Dean, College of Education and Human Development, George Mason University. Dr. Guerra-López joined George Mason University in July 2022. She previously served as the interim Dean of the College of Education, as well as the interim Dean of the Graduate School at Wayne State University. She is also a Professor of Learning Systems Design and Technology and has served as Special Advisor for Digital Learning Strategy and

Innovation. Dr. Guerra-López will provide holistic oversight of ACCESS, including the supervision of the ACCESS Director, and the innovative instructional aspects of the lab school, including the Learning Innovations Lab). She will also work collaboratively with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer at Northern Virginia Community College and the Superintendent of Loudoun County Public Schools. Dr. Guerra-López will also secure University resources and facilitate partnerships with other school divisions and industry partners. **Dr. Guerra-López will also report directly to VDOE.**

NOVA Representative: Dr. Eun-Woo Chang, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, Northern Virginia Community College. Dr. Chang joined Northern Virginia Community College in July 2021. Prior to this role, he held academic leadership positions at Ashland University and Mercer County Community College. Dr. Chang also served as a program director in the Division of Undergraduate Education at the National Science Foundation. He will provide oversight of instructional programming related to dual enrollment processes at the community college level and also provide oversight on some of the pre-professional pathways offered.

LCPS Representative: Dr. Aaron Spence, Superintendent, Loudoun County Public Schools. Dr. Spence currently serves as Superintendent of Loudoun County Public Schools and is responsible for the instructional leadership and administrative operation of 96 schools and centers that serve 83,000 students. Prior to that, he served as Superintendent of Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS), where he was named State Superintendent of the Year in 2018. Dr. Spence has also been a superintendent in North Carolina and held various roles in Central Office and served as a school principal in Texas and Virginia. Dr. Spence began his career in 1994 as a French and photojournalism teacher. **He will support the Lab School Director (described below) in providing operational oversight of the lab school.**

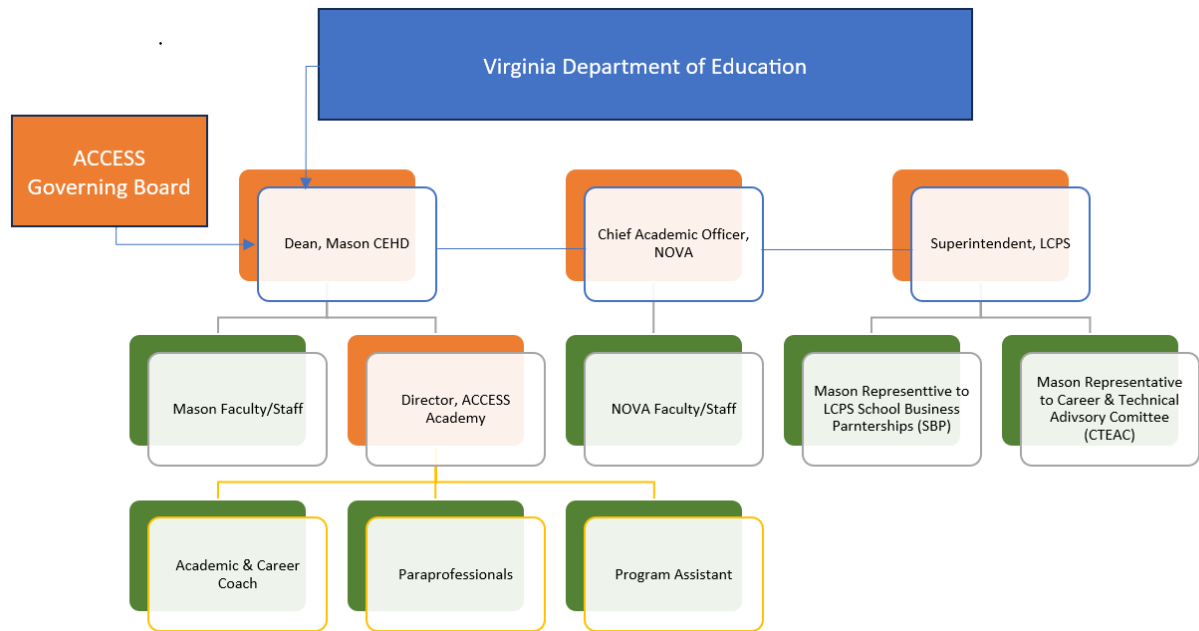
In addition to the CEHD Dean, the NOVA Chief Academic Officer, and the LCPS Superintendent, the Governing Board will also include the Director of the lab school, who will be an administrative faculty member of the George Mason University College of Education and Human Development (CEHD). They will report directly to the Dean of CEHD and provide oversight of the instructional programming in the operational aspects of the lab school. The Director will serve as a liaison between ACCESS Academy, **participating school divisions**, and Northern Virginia Community College. The Director will also be responsible for organizing professional learning opportunities for ACCESS instructors. **The Director will be hired no later than February 2025.**

2. A chart that clearly presents the school’s organizational structure, including lines of authority and reporting between the governing board, staff, any related bodies such as advisory bodies or parent and teacher councils, the Board, and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the school.

Please see Figure 4 below for the general organizational structure of ACCESS Academy.

Figure 4

General Organizational Structure – ACCESS Academy



3. A clear description of the roles and responsibilities for the governing board, the school’s leadership and management team, and any other entities shown in the organization chart. This includes a description of the functions, roles, and duties of the governing board and its proposed composition and bylaws. The description must detail the specific role of the governing board in the operation and oversight of the college partnership laboratory school.

The **Governing Board** will represent voices from ACCESS stakeholders. The Board will support shared governance of the lab school, including the establishment and revision of school policies and recommend significant and strategic decisions for the school. The Board will be the authority to which school leadership is accountable for the instructional and operational aspects of ACCESS Academy.

The **Dean** of the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University will provide oversight of the instructional aspects of the lab school, including supervision of the school Director. The Dean will serve as liaison between Mason, the Superintendent of Loudoun County Public Schools, and the Chief Academic Officer of Northern Virginia Community College. The Dean will secure university resources and facilitate partnerships with other university colleges/divisions. The Dean will report progress/updates to the **ACCESS Academy Governing Board**.

The **Superintendent** of Loudoun County Public Schools will support the **ACCESS Academy Director in providing operational oversight of the lab school.**

The **Chief Academic Officer** of Northern Virginia Community College will provide oversight of instructional programming related to dual enrollment processes at the community college.

The **Director** of the lab school will be an administrative employee of the George Mason University College of Education and Human Development, reporting directly to the Dean of the CEHD. The Director will provide oversight of the instructional programming and operational aspects of the lab school. The Director will provide supervision of faculty work at the lab school and any school staff employed by the George Mason University College of Education and Human Development.

A **Career Coach** will be responsible for providing students with specific IT career advising. This coach will work collaboratively with students and instructors at Mason and NOVA and also conduct outreach to industry partners. The career coach will also help facilitate internships, mentorships, and other opportunities. They will report to the Director.

Paraprofessionals will be hourly wage employees of George Mason University, reporting to the ACCESS Academy Director. They will provide support to ACCESS Academy students with special education needs.

A part-time **Program Assistant** will be employed by the lab school to assist in the operational aspects of the lab school including but not limited to scheduling, recruitment, marketing, outreach, assessment data collection, event support and student services. They will report to the Director.

Two representatives (one each) from Mason will also be included in the LCPS School Business Partnership (SBP) and the Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee (CTEAC). They will attend monthly meetings and contribute as active participants, reporting to the Superintendent of LCPS.

4. A description of the governing board’s relationship with the affiliated public or private institution of higher education and its Board of Visitors, any local school boards, parents, and community organizations.

V. Management Structure: The following components must be addressed:

1. A staffing chart for the school’s first year and a staffing plan for the term of the contract.

While Figure 4 presented earlier provides an organizational chart, Table 3 below demonstrates the staffing plan for Year 1 (2025-26), with a plan to support 120 students in grades 9-12 (n=30 in each grade).

Table 3

Staffing Plan – Year 1 (2025-2026)

Position	Number	Employed By
Director	1	Mason
Career Coach	1	Mason
Program Assistant	1	Mason
Grants/Finance Admin	1	Mason
Paraprofessionals	1-2	Mason

Industry Experts	4-6	Mason
Mason Faculty	3	Mason
NOVA Faculty	2	NOVA
Graduate Assistants	2	Mason

2. Plans for recruiting and developing school leadership and staff.

The Director position will be advertised by Mason no later than December 2024. The Mason CEHD Dean will select a candidate with input from a search committee that will include stakeholders from Mason, LCPS, and NOVA. The Director will be hired no later than February 2025.

The Career Coach position will be advertised by Mason no later than January 2025. The Mason CEHD Dean will select a candidate with input from a search committee that will include the Director and stakeholders from Mason, LCPS, and NOVA. The Career Coach position will be hired no later than March 2025.

The **part-time Program Assistant** and Grants/Finance Administrator positions will be advertised by Mason by January 2025 and hired no later than March 2025.

Paraprofessional positions will be advertised by Mason no later than June 2025. These positions will be hired by Mason to interface with the lab school and serve students as applicable.

Mason and NOVA Faculty will be identified within the university and community college. Course reassignments will be provided to Mason and NOVA Faculty by the George Mason University ACCESS Academy budget.

Industry experts (4-6 in total) will be recruited by Mason, aligned with the community project needs, as determined no later than July 2025. Industry experts will be paid from the lab school budget.

Graduate Assistants will be recruited through the Mason Graduate School and CEHD and identified no later than March 2025.

Instructional staff (Director, Career Coach, Mason Faculty, NOVA Faculty, Industry Experts) will begin work on curriculum development in June 2024, including identifying community and industry needs for the problem-based learning focus. Mason faculty will lead professional learning opportunities for all instructional staff. Professional learning and training will begin no later than July 2025. Stipends will be provided to NOVA faculty and Industry Experts for developing training. All members of the educational team will engage in training as applicable.

3. A description of the academic/professional experience/qualifications of the college partnership laboratory school’s leadership and proposed faculty who will teach at the school.

The ACCESS Academy Director will possess the following qualifications:

- Minimum of a master’s degree in Education Leadership
- Professional Virginia educator’s license with endorsement in Administration/Supervision
- 3 years of successful teaching experience
- Demonstrated record of significant leadership experience, preferably in the P-12 setting

- Demonstrated knowledge/experience in working with higher education partners
- Demonstrated commitment to improving school quality, teacher effectiveness, and equitable student success

Industry Experts will possess the following qualifications:

- Education, experience, and credentialing in the field of expertise, as recognized by industry standards
- Demonstrated ability to effectively work with children
- At least 3 years of experience in the field of expertise
- Ability to work well as a team member
- Willingness to receive, reflect on, and apply feedback

Mason/NOVA faculty will possess the following qualifications:

- Master's degree in related field; doctoral degree preferred
- Demonstrated successful record of teaching in public schools
- Significant contributions to teaching, scholarship, and service in the areas of professional expertise
- Strong background in curriculum development
- Ability to work well with teams
- Ability to create and provide high-quality professional learning for educators
- Willingness to receive, reflect on, and apply feedback

The Career Coach will possess the following qualifications:

- Master's degree in related field; doctoral degree preferred
- Previous coaching/advising experience or formal coaching training
- Demonstrated successful record of coaching in public schools
- Ability to establish and maintain connections with industry
- Ability to stay up to date with current trends in career development
- Ability to work well with teams
- Willingness to receive, reflect on, and apply feedback

Paraprofessionals will possess the following qualifications:

- High school diploma or higher in related field
- Demonstrated record of working in public schools
- Demonstrated experience working with students who have special education needs
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively
- Ability to work well with students, staff, teams, and families
- Ability to implement teacher planned instruction
- Ability to monitor, record, and chart student data
- Willingness to receive, reflect on, and apply feedback

4. An assurance that the applicant will meet the conditions in § [22.1-349.9](#) of the *Code of Virginia*, which states that “teachers who work in a college partnership laboratory school shall hold a license issued by the Board or, in the case of an instructor in the Board-approved teacher education program of the institution of higher education, be eligible to hold a Virginia teaching license. Teachers working in a college partnership

laboratory school shall be subject to the requirements of §§ [22.1-296.1](#), [22.1-296.2](#), and [22.1-296.4](#) that are applicable to teachers employed by a local school board.”

Faculty who work for ACCESS Academy will be required to hold a license issued by the Board or be eligible to hold a Virginia teaching license. All faculty working at ACCESS Academy will be subject to the requirements of §§ 22.1-296.1, 22.1-296.2, and 22.1-296.4. College faculty who teach PBL IT courses will be required to meet licensure requirements for teachers of CTE courses as required by VDOE. Mason and NOVA will ensure compliance with state law regarding licensure of the faculty at the respective institution.

ACCESS Academy will comply with all federal, state, and local laws regarding background checks for those adults in direct contact with students enrolled in the lab school. Background checks will be monitored through the College of Education and Human Development for those hired directly by Mason. Northern Virginia Community College will monitor background checks for those faculty who work directly for NOVA.

5. The school’s leadership and teacher employment policies, including performance evaluation plans. Such performance evaluation plans must be consistent with the policies of the institution of higher education.

The director of the lab school and career coach will adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Mason Administrative/Professional Faculty Handbook, as per the policies established by Mason (https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/HumanResources/HRDM-HRDataManagement/HRDM_APFacultyHandbook.pdf)

Paraprofessionals and the program assistant will adhere to the guidelines outlined for wage employees established by Mason (<https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/wage-employment-non-student/>)

For dual enrollment courses, recruitment will be handled by NOVA in collaboration with the school division. Dual enrollment teachers will be employed by NOVA. For PBL IT courses, recruitment will be handled by NOVA and Mason, as per the policies established by each (<https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/recruitment-and-hiring-of-university-employees/> and <https://go.boarddocs.com/va/vccs/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=CB55Z812A23F>).

6. A plan that addresses the qualifications of the teachers and administrators at the college partnership laboratory school, including compliance with state law and regulations regarding Board licenses and endorsements. (See § [22.1-349.9](#) of the *Code of Virginia*.)

The lab school will ensure that the educational and professional qualifications of its teachers and administrators meet VDOE requirements for licensing and/or endorsement areas. Mason and NOVA will ensure compliance with state law and regulations regarding Board licenses and endorsements regarding the faculty teaching at each institution.

7. A plan to provide high-quality professional development programs (See § [22.1-253.13:5](#) of the *Code of Virginia*.)

High-quality professional development programming will be provided to all faculty associated with ACCESS Academy. Professional development will be focused on employability skills and innovative

problem-based learning pedagogical practices and methodology. Professional development will be aligned to the Standards of Quality, Standard 5 concerning classroom instruction and educational leadership. Professional development will be immersive and will allow teachers and faculty to reflect, integrate skills into current practice and lessons, and create sound assessments.

While traditional professional development focuses on discrete skills or techniques for high interest activities, it can often lead to shallow lessons. Yet, Leinhardt et al. (1995) discussed teaching practice as a coherent whole that cannot be separated into discrete skills or techniques. Further, Ermeling & Graff-Ermeling (2016) suggest an emphasis on lesson planning with a focus on a coherent story line. Transformative understanding then, requires an innovative approach. Professional development will focus on teaching as a coherent whole and will be grounded in a coherent story line. Teachers will be supported in not only learn the skill of how to teach problem-based learning but also in developing a transformative understanding of why this type of curriculum is useful, important, and effective (Donnell, 2007; Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman, 2010).

In addition to professional development, ACCESS Academy faculty will receive ongoing technical assistance concerning employability skills and innovative problem-based learning pedagogical practices. Faculty may engage and/or partner with faculty and staff at Mason and NOVA to ensure fidelity to the teaching model and alignment with wraparound support for students. The Director will also receive coaching support aligned with the guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals. Instructional faculty/staff in the school director will also work collaboratively in the analysis of formative and summative assessments to determine patterns and trends in teaching and learning. This will further inform adjustments to ongoing professional development programs and technical assistance.

8. Provisions for the evaluation of staff at regular intervals.

All ACCESS Academy faculty and staff will be formally evaluated annually by their employer. Official performance evaluations will be conducted in accordance with George Mason University, Northern Virginia Community College, and **school division** policies. Additionally, ongoing constructive feedback will be a normal part of the culture of the lab school. Those working with and for ACCESS Academy will receive formative, anecdotal, and formal feedback with the ultimate goal of feedback serving as the impetus for professional growth and improving how students are served. Evaluation will also always include multiple data points rather than snapshots in time. Data points may include the following:

- Instructional coaching
- Peer observations
- Assignment analyses
- Equity audits
- Self-evaluations
- Formal performance evaluations

The following policies and resources guide George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College concerning the evaluation of faculty and staff:

Mason Policies:

Evaluating, Documenting, and Justifying Faculty Qualifications and Credentials -
<https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/faculty-credential-evaluation-and-documentation/>

Performance Evaluation Resources - <https://hr.gmu.edu/performance-evaluations/performance-evaluation-resources/>

Evaluation of Adjunct Faculty - <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/evaluation-of-adjunct-faculty/>

NOVA and VCCS Policies:

Faculty Qualifications for Academic Rank - <https://go.boarddocs.com/va/vccs/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=CTXS9B719206>

Qualifications of Faculty - <https://go.boarddocs.com/va/vccs/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=CHESSEG72532B>

Development and Evaluation – Teaching Faculty - <https://www.nvcc.edu/policies/files/419-Faculty-Development-and-Evaluation.pdf>

9. Provisions for a human resource policy for the school that is consistent with state and federal law.

All individuals appointed to positions at ACCESS Academy will ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, while also adhering to the personnel policies outlined by George Mason University (Mason), Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), and the **school division**.

The current human resource policies for each institutional partner are provided below.

Mason - <https://hr.gmu.edu/policies-and-handbooks/>

NOVA - <https://www.nvcc.edu/policies/Default.aspx?cat=Human%20Resources>

LCPS – <https://www.lcps.org/Page/222925>

10. An explanation of any partnerships or contractual relationships central to the college partnership laboratory school’s operations or mission, including information regarding any partnerships with school divisions to provide educational or ancillary services. Contractual relationships include procuring the services of an education management organization, food services, transportation, school health services, custodial services, and security services. (See § [22.1-349.3](#) C of the *Code of Virginia*.)

As ACCESS Academy will operate at NOVA Loudoun, services provided for students will be part of those provided to any other student at NOVA, including school health, custodial, and security services. Transportation to ACCESS Academy **will be provided by the sending school division while food services at the lab school will be provided by LCPS**. Services will be provided in alignment with § 22.1-349.3. George Mason University will initiate the development of a Memorandum of Understanding with Loudoun County Public Schools once funding is awarded.

11. Notification to all school employees of the terms and conditions of employment.

The ACCESS Academy Director and Career Coach, will be hired as Administrative/Professional Faculty. Those faculty members will adhere to the terms and condition of current George Mason University Administrative/Professional Faculty position employment. The Program Assistant will be hired as a wage employee and that staff member will adhere to the terms and conditions of employment as outlined in George Mason University current policies. Paraprofessionals will be hired as wage employees and will adhere to the terms and conditions of employment as outlined in George Mason University current policies.

Faculty employed for IT courses at NOVA and Mason would adhere to the terms and conditions of employment as outlined by Adjunct Faculty contracts at Northern Virginia Community College and George Mason University.

12. Information and materials indicating how parents, the community, and other stakeholders were involved in developing the application for the college partnership laboratory school. A description of how parental involvement will be used to support the educational needs of the students, the school's mission and philosophy, and its educational focus.

Feedback from families, community members, and stakeholders informed the development of the ACCESS Academy application and will guide the mission, philosophy and educational focus once established. In early February 2023, we hosted a roundtable discussion with leading industry partners in Northern Virginia, including representatives from Google, Amazon World Services (AWS), Microsoft, and Northrup Grumman among others, to gather feedback on the conceptual framework of ACCESS Academy. Industry stakeholders provided insights into the general curriculum, learn and earn approach, and opportunities to expand real-world experiences (e.g., internships) with high school students. Updates to industry partners have been periodically provided since that time and industry partners continue to be enthusiastic about the lab school project.

Representatives from Mason had engaged multiple school divisions in conversations about the lab school concept, including Loudoun County Public Schools, since early in the lab school planning stages with the intent of ultimately scaling up the partnership to multiple school divisions in the region. Mason and LCPS resumed discussions in February 2024 and with shared strategic aims and interest in exploring a collaborative partnership, LCPS started internal meetings soon after to discuss the lab school partnership. Soon after, a team from Mason met with administrative stakeholders from LCPS to discuss specific details of the lab school and receive feedback from Loudoun County that was later integrated into the application. Discussions and updates between Mason and NOVA have been ongoing as the site of the lab school will be located on NOVA's Loudoun County campus in Sterling.

Loudoun County Public Schools has continued to share the concept and details of ACCESS Academy with administrative personnel and LCPS School Board. The lab school application proposal was shared with the full Loudoun County School Board on February 22, 2024 and also shared with individual Board members during weekly meetings. Additionally, LCPS staff co-presented the lab school concept with Mason representatives at a public meeting of the LCPS Specialized Programs and Centers (SPC) Committee on March 5, 2024. The LCPS Superintendent and Board Chair provided letters to support this application. A copy of the agenda with the lab school presentation to the LCPS Specialized Programs and Centers (SPC) Committee is included with the supporting documents for this application.

As new partners come on board, stakeholder, family, and community member feedback will continue to be critical to ACCESS Academy during the transition from conceptualization to implementation. Families will be engaged through opportunities to serve on the governance board and engagement and listening sessions. Feedback will be collected in an intentional and systematic manner from stakeholders, students, families, educators, and community members through formative and summative evaluation, and used as a means for guiding continuous improvement.

13. Plans and timelines for student recruitment and an open enrollment process for any child who is a resident of the Commonwealth, including lottery procedures if sufficient space is unavailable. Please include a description of the lottery process to be used to determine school enrollment on a space-available basis and a time line for when the lottery process will begin for the first academic year of enrollment and when parents will be notified of the outcome of the lottery process. (See § [22.1-349.3](#) of the *Code of Virginia*.)

The ACCESS Academy student recruitment and enrollment process will begin as early as January 2025. Cooperating partners from Mason, NOVA, and the school division will begin marketing and publicizing the opening of the lab school. An application will be developed in collaboration with the NOVA/Mason ADVANCE partnership and input from school division stakeholders. Information sessions for parents and students will be held at a LCPS site and online. Interested parents and students will be sent information about the lab school and invited to apply.

Applications for ACCESS Academy will be through a personalized electronic link in Spring 2025. In addition to requiring basic information (legal name, date of birth, parent/guardian name, place of residence) students will be asked to submit information about completed courses, and academic/career goals. The only prerequisite for attending the lab school is completion of the VDOE recommended coursework for each grade level. Applications will be reviewed for completeness, sorted by the grade level of the following year, and then complete applications will be entered into the lottery for the number of available spots per grade level. LCPS Regulation 630.1 – ([https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/files/BLKL39548B3E/\\$file/5410-REG.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/files/BLKL39548B3E/$file/5410-REG.pdf)) will be updated to include the lab school should funding be approved. Students who are enrolled in the lab school will automatically be admitted the subsequent year unless they wish to give up their seat and return to their base school and division. This must be done in writing by a parent or guardian and confirmed by the Director. When students enroll in the lab school in 11th grade, this will also initiate the process for concurrent enrollment in Mason and NOVA as they may take classes offered by both institutions for college credit.

Students who are not initially accepted to ACCESS Academy will be put on a wait list and parents/guardians will be informed of the student's position on the waitlist for their grade level. Because of requirements for credit-bearing courses, if a slot opens, students may be admitted to the lab school at the beginning of the academic year or at the beginning of a new semester only.

14. Any enrollment-related policies and procedures that address special situations, such as the enrollment of siblings and children of faculty and founders and the enrollment of nonresident students, if applicable. Consistent with a college partnership laboratory school's mission and purpose that may address special populations of students, the applicant must indicate how to ensure that community outreach has been undertaken so that special populations are aware of the formation of the college partnership laboratory school and that enrollment is open

to all students residing in the Commonwealth. Pursuant to § [22.1-349.3](#) B of the Code of Virginia, enrollment in a college partnership laboratory school “shall be open through a lottery process on a space-available basis to any student who is deemed to reside within the Commonwealth. A waiting list shall be established if adequate space is not available to accommodate all students whose parents have requested to be entered in the lottery process. Such waiting list shall also be prioritized through a lottery process, and parents shall be informed of their student's position on the list.”

All enrollment-related policies and procedures will be consistent at the lab school and aligned with § 22.1-349.3. Additionally, policies of the lab school concerning admission will be consistent with those already in place in [participating school divisions](#).

15. A model *Student Code of Conduct* policy that addresses student behavior, discipline, and participation in school activities. The plan should identify the role of teachers and administrators in discipline and mentoring. The plan must also identify disciplinary policies for special education students.

When ACCESS Academy students are on any Loudoun County Public School property including when riding LCPS transportation, they will be subject to the policies established by Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) in the Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR) for Families and Student Code of Conduct. The SRR (<https://www.lcps.org/SRR>), updated annually, details all LCPS expectations in relation to student behavior, discipline, and participation in school activities. The LCPS SRR also explains adult responses to enhance school safety and to create a fair, equitable, and supportive school environment. The role of teachers and administrators in discipline, mentoring, and student support is included. Principals receive annual professional development concerning updates, facilitating communication with parents, and review processes for data reporting. The LCPS Department of Research, Assessment, and School Improvement is responsible for reporting data to VDOE. The SRR also includes disciplinary policies and procedures for students who currently have IEPs and Section 504 plans. From the Student Rights and Responsibilities section of the LCPS SRR – “School rules are necessary to ensure all students have access to their education without disruption and in an orderly and appropriate setting. School rules are designed to deter undesirable behavior, while teaching proper behavior. A goal of public education is to have students become responsible adults in a free society.”

At any time ACCESS Academy students are on Mason properties, they will be subject to the policies established by George Mason University in the current Code of Student Conduct (<https://studentconduct.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Code-of-Student-Conduct-2023-2024-pdf.pdf>). This Code applies to all Mason students. The purpose is to foster a safe, secure, and fair learning environment by establishing expectations for student behavior and identifying a process for discipline and resolving incidents. Student activity participation is included in the Code. If there is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and the ACCESS Academy student is a minor, a FERPA waiver may be utilized to allow the assistance of a parent/guardian. The Student Conduct Office refers cases to a professional staff member who is a point of contact and hearing officer. Cases can be heard by a hearing officer or by student request, the Community Adjudication Board (<https://studentconduct.gmu.edu/student-boards/community-adjudication-board-2/>). If a student discloses in the process that they have special education accommodations that need to be considered, the hearing officer will connect with Disability Services to confirm the approved accommodations and how to best incorporate them within the resolution process. ACCESS Academy students taking

courses for Mason credit shall be bound, insofar as those courses are concerned, by the Mason Honor Code and all student requirements stated in the Mason Catalog, in addition to the conduct code of the school division. In cases where it is not clear which set of policies apply, the ACCESS Academy Director will make a recommendation to the Dean of the College of Education and Human Development whose decision will be final.

When ACCESS Academy students are on NOVA properties, they will be subject to the policies established in the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.nvcc.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>). NOVA's policy establishes guidelines for the above and identifies the roles of students and administration. The Student Integrity and Conduct staff (<https://www.nvcc.edu/student-rights/SIC/index.html>) supports students, faculty, and staff on all NOVA campuses. Similar to Mason, if a student discloses during the hearing process for a possible violation of the Student Code of Conduct that they have special education accommodations that need to be considered, the hearing officer will connect with NOVA's Office of Accommodations and Accessibility Services to confirm the approved accommodations and how to best incorporate them within the resolution process. A FERPA waiver may also be utilized.

Mason and NOVA both collect and report school safety and student discipline as required under The Clery Act. This includes an annual fire security and safety report, daily crime and fire log, emergency notifications, and cooperative work with local and campus police, and other resources. Both institutions have a Clery Compliance Coordinator that can assist with information and reporting. Reporting information for Mason and NOVA is provided in more detail through the links provided below.

Mason - https://police.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Clery-Act-101_with-embedded-links_083118.pdf

NOVA - <https://www.nvcc.edu/police/clery/index.html>

16. A detailed school start-up plan that identifies tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.

The tentative start-up plan for ACCESS Academy is provided below.

Table 4*Tentative Start-Up Plan for ACCESS Academy*

Timeline	Task	Responsible
Dec 2023	Inception of ACCESS	CEHD Dean; Superintendent LCPS; CAO NOVA
Dec 2024	Governing Board established	CEHD Dean; Superintendent LCPS; CAO NOVA
Jan-Feb 2025	ACCESS Director hired	CEHD Dean
Jan-Mar 2025	Supporting positions hired	CEHD Dean
Jan-Mar 2025	Supporting faculty positions identified and course reassignments provided as appropriated	CEHD Dean, NOVA CAO
Jan-Feb 2025	Application and enrollment procedures established	Director
Feb-Mar 2025	Evaluation framework and plan developed	Evaluator
Feb-Mar 2025	Marketing planning and launch	Director
Mar 2025	Evaluation Framework presented to Board	Director & CEHD Dean
Feb-Mar 2025	Graduate Assistants recruited	CEHD Dean
Mar-May 2024	PBL curriculum assessment and development	CEHD & NOVA Faculty
Mar -May 2025	Cohorts identified and scheduled accordingly	Director
April-May 2025	Develop data collection and monitoring tools based on evaluation plan	Evaluator
May-July 2025	Professional development	Mason Faculty
July 2025	ACCESS Academy officially opens	Director
July 2025	Paraprofessional assigned	Director
July-August 2025	Senior Summer Bridge Program offered	Director
August 2025	Launch new school year	Director
August 2025	Deploy data collection and monitoring tools	Director and Evaluator
Oct-Dec 2026	Formative evaluation of Year 1 conducted	Evaluator
Jan 2026	Presentation of formative evaluation: Early lessons learned, Opportunities for improvement, and next steps	Director and CEHD Dean

17 A description of co-curricular and extracurricular programs and how these programs will be funded and delivered.

Co-curricular and extracurricular programs **will continue to be made available to students through their home school division.** Students attending ACCESS Academy will be able to participate in regularly scheduled athletic programs, and interest clubs and groups. Additionally, students will have opportunities for co-curricular opportunities at George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College. These may include coding, cybersecurity, and/or industry-related clubs. Funding will come from startup funds, community grants, and industry collaboration and cooperation.

18 A general description of any operational incentives/partnerships that the college partnership laboratory school intends to have with school divisions to enhance both the

educational program of the college partnership laboratory school and the partnering school division(s).

In addition to the partnership with Loudoun County Public Schools, ACCESS Academy intends to develop and have partnerships with industry experts who will provide mentoring, internship opportunities, technical support regarding scenarios for the problem-based learning IT curriculum, field trips, and other assistance. Outreach to industry partners has already begun and the response has been positive. Additionally, there will be opportunities for collaboration across disciplines between industry experts, university, LCPS, and other school division faculty. ACCESS Academy also intends to provide stipends for professional development and funding for technical assistance. There is also a plan to develop micro-credentials for teachers who will complete professional development programming in problem-based learning instruction.

Financial and Operations Information: The following components must be addressed:

1. A description of the college partnership laboratory school’s financial plan and policies, including financial controls and audit requirements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

George Mason University will serve as the fiscal agent for this project. As a non-federal entity that expends \$750,000 or more in federal award funds during its fiscal year, Mason is required to obtain a Single Audit or Program Specific Audit each year that complies with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Mason’s audited financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2022 can be found at <https://www.apa.virginia.gov/reports/GeorgeMasonUniversity2022.pdf>.

In order to maintain proper financial controls, Mason uses the Agency Risk Management and Internal Control Standards (ARMICS) which is a mandate of the Commonwealth of Virginia and requires State Agencies to implement internal control standards and best practices. The Department of Accounts ARMIC Standards may be found at https://www.doa.virginia.gov/reference/ARMICS/ARMICS_Standards.pdf.

Other specific Mason Financial Policies and Procedures that ensure compliance with ARMIC Standards may be found at <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/university-policies/financial/>

2. Start-up and five-year budgets with clearly stated assumptions and information regarding projected revenues and expenditures.

Over the six-year period of performance, the cost of the Lab School is estimated to be \$5,199,991 with \$1,000,000 of startup and \$3,360,000 of projected operating revenue needed during years zero through four for a total of \$4,360,000 requested from the Virginia Department of Education. Operating revenue in years 1-5 is based on \$7,000 per student and 120 students for a total of \$840,000 per year. George Mason University will provide in-kind support during years 1-5 and hopes to secure future philanthropic gifts and grants to support remaining proposed expenditures in year 5. The following tables illustrate the six-year projected revenues and expenditures below.

Figure A: Illustrative Itemized Budget Spreadsheet

	Yr 0	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Total	Comments
Lab School Operating Costs								
Personnel	368,006	529,437	555,373	582,605	602,502	585,138	3,223,061	per lab school application pages 40-43
Non-personnel Expenses	380,154	93,033	67,100	39,865	19,970	36,797	636,919	per lab school application pages 40-43
Staff development	46,500	46,500	46,500	46,500	46,500	46,500	279,000	per lab school application pages 40-43
Equip/Tech/Furniture		-	-	-	-	-	-	
Admin Fee	205,340	171,027	171,027	171,027	171,027	171,563	1,061,011	per lab school application pages 40-43
Total Lab School Operating Costs	1,000,000	839,997	840,000	839,997	839,999	839,998	5,199,991	[A]
Annual Enrollment (# of pupils)		120	120	120	120	120	600	
Cost per pupil (\$)		\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$1,733,330	
Estimated Lab School Funding								
Planning Grant	199,789						199,789	per lab school planning grant
Start-up	1,000,000						1,000,000	per lab school application page 37
Operating		840,000	840,000	840,000	840,000		3,360,000	per lab school application page 37
Subtotal College Partnership Lab School Fund	1,199,789	840,000	840,000	840,000	840,000	-	4,559,789	
Outside Funding								
Local share			-	-	-	-	-	
Grant funding			-	-	-	440,000	440,000	per lab school application page 43
Philanthropic funding			-	-	-	400,000	400,000	per lab school application page 43
Higher education institution support		-	-	-	-	-	-	
Business & industry partner contributions			-	-	-	-	-	
Fundraising and development			-	-	-	-	-	
Subtotal Other Funding	-	-	-	-	-	840,000	840,000	
Total Funding	1,199,789	840,000	840,000	840,000	840,000	840,000	5,399,789	[B]

Funding Sustainability? Yes Funding is greater than costs

Figure B: Annual Expenditure Sheet
Budget Expenditure Worksheet

Personnel - Salaries				Yr 0	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
Number	Rate	Run Rate	Annual Cost						
<i>* List all position & fully burdened compensation (example below)</i>									
Director	1.00	\$158,520	\$158,520	\$79,260	\$166,446	\$174,768	\$183,507	\$192,682	\$202,316
Career Counselor/Coach	1.00	\$105,680	\$105,680	\$52,840	\$110,964	\$116,512	\$122,338	\$128,455	\$134,877
Grants Admin/Fiscal Officer	0.80	\$113,440	\$90,752	\$45,376	\$95,290	\$100,054	\$105,057	\$110,310	\$72,390
GMU Faculty	3.00		\$129,620	\$172,825	\$107,380	\$112,749	\$118,386	\$115,609	\$121,389
Paraprofessionals	1.00	\$10,730	\$10,730	\$0	\$10,730	\$10,730	\$10,730	\$10,730	\$10,730
Hourly Program Support	0.50	\$33,478	\$16,739	\$17,705	\$38,628	\$40,559	\$42,587	\$44,717	\$43,435
Total Personnel Costs			\$512,041	\$368,006	\$529,437	\$555,373	\$582,605	\$602,502	\$585,138
Non-Personnel				Yr 0	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
Number	Rate	Run Rate	Annual Cost						
<i>* List all additional services (examples below)</i>									
Travel			\$5,812	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$1,000
Consultants/Professional Services			\$50,000	\$170,000	\$40,000	\$25,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$23,677
Supplies & Materials			\$35,000	\$180,534	\$23,413	\$12,480	\$5,245	\$350	\$0
Other General Costs			\$19,620	\$19,620	\$19,620	\$19,620	\$19,620	\$19,620	\$12,120
Total Non-Personnel Costs			\$110,432	\$380,154	\$93,033	\$67,100	\$39,865	\$19,970	\$36,797
Staff Development				Yr 0	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
Number	Rate	Run Rate	Annual Cost						
<i>* List all staff development costs (examples below)</i>									
Staff development									
Teacher support/training			\$46,500	\$46,500	\$46,500	\$46,500	\$46,500	\$46,500	\$46,500
Travel									
Total Non-Personnel Costs			\$46,500	\$46,500	\$46,500	\$46,500	\$46,500	\$46,500	\$46,500
Equip/Tech/Furniture				Yr 0	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
Number	Rate	Run Rate	Annual Cost						
<i>* List all staff development costs (examples below)</i>									
Classroom technology/capital assets									
Facilities/renovations									
IT support/licenses									
Total equipment/technology/furniture			\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Administrative Fees				Yr 0	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
Number	Rate	Run Rate	Annual Cost						
<i>* List all costs (examples below)</i>									
University administrative fees	0	0	\$171,027	\$205,340	\$171,027	\$171,027	\$171,027	\$171,027	\$171,563
Total admin fees			\$171,027	\$205,340	\$171,027	\$171,027	\$171,027	\$171,027	\$171,563
Total Operating Costs			\$840,000	\$1,000,000	\$839,997	\$840,000	\$839,997	\$839,999	\$839,998

George Mason University
BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

PERSONNEL COSTS

A Lab School Director will be hired into a full-time Administrative/Professional Faculty position during the startup year at a base salary of \$120,000 with annual increases included in years 1-4 for a total of \$603,076.

A Career Counselor/Coach will be hired into a full-time Professional Faculty position in the startup year at a base salary of \$80,000 with annual increases included in years 1-4 for a total of \$402,051.

A Grants Administrator/Fiscal Officer will be hired into a full-time Classified Staff position in the startup year at a base salary of \$80,000 and will dedicate 40% of their time to working on the project for total salary support of \$32,000 in year zero. The Grants Administrator will dedicate 80% of their time in years 1-4. Annual increases are included in years 1-4 for a total of \$321,640 of support. This position will provide the necessary financial and grants administration support for this project. Specific responsibilities will include processing requests for purchases, contracts, stipends, incentives, honoraria, new hires, travel, catering, etc. They will also perform the required monthly reconciliations and ensure financial documentation, receipts and approvals are on file for all transactions and assist with preparation of reports and other related requests.

Salary Support is budgeted for GMU Academic (\$24,000) & Calendar Year (\$96,000) Faculty Effort and Course Releases in the startup year and \$75,600 plus annual increases in years 1-4 to assist with development of curriculum, professional learning opportunities and training. Faculty salary support for startup year through year 4 totals \$445,845. Summer Salary support for Academic Year Faculty in the amount of \$13,332 is budgeted in the startup year and \$22,072 in years 1-3. Total Summer Salary Support for Academic Year Faculty for startup through year 3 is \$35,404.

Funds to support non-student hourly wage appointments for paraprofessionals is requested for 250 hours at \$40/hour for a total of \$10,000 each year in years 1-4 for a total of \$40,000.

Funds are requested to support a non-student hourly wage appointment for a part-time Program Assistant at an hourly rate of \$30/hr to assist with scheduling, recruitment, marketing, outreach, assessment data collection, student services and events. During the startup year anticipated hours will be around 550 and in subsequent years up to 1200 hours of support will be needed each year. Total Hourly Wages will be \$16,500 in startup year and total \$171,665 for startup through year 4.

Mason provides annual merit increases to Faculty and Staff. An escalation factor of 5% has been included for all personnel each year.

Total Salary Support requested from VDOE funds: \$2,019,681

GMU Project Leadership and Additional Faculty will provide in-kind salary support for their time in the amount of \$74,912 in year 1 with annual increases included in years 2-4 for a total of \$322,883.

GMU will also provide \$54,000 of in-kind salary support in year 1 for two 20 hour per week Graduate Research Assistants at \$27,000 each to work on the project during the Academic Year with annual increases included in years 2-4 for a total in-kind commitment of \$232,747.

Total Salary Support from GMU In-Kind Contributions: \$555,630

FRINGE BENEFITS

George Mason University's negotiated fringe benefit rates for Fiscal Year 2024 are applied as follows:

Faculty (Admin, Teaching, & Post-Docs)	32.1%
Classified Staff	41.8%
FICA Only (summer, adjunct, non-student wages)	7.3%

The Faculty Fringe rate of 32.1% has been applied to \$1,450,971 of Academic and Calendar Year Salary Support for a total of \$465,762. The Classified Staff rate of 41.8% has been applied to \$321,640 of salary support for a total of \$134,446 and the 7.3% Fringe rate has been applied to \$35,404 of Faculty Summer Salary and \$211,665 for non-student wages for a total of \$18,036.

Total Fringe Benefits Support Requested from VDOE Funds: \$618,244

In-kind: The Faculty Fringe rate of 32.1% has been applied to \$322,883 of Academic and Calendar Year Salary Support for a total of \$103,645.

Total Fringe Benefits Support Provided in-kind from GMU: \$103,645

The rates quoted above shall, at the time of funding be subject to adjustment, if superseding Government approved rates have been established. Salaries, wages and fringe benefits are estimates only and will be paid and billed in accordance with University policy.

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

Funds in the amount of \$222,022 are requested from VDOE for supplies and materials for startup through year 4. Necessary supplies for this project are markers, chart paper, professional development books, and classroom supplies. Funds are also requested for printing curriculum materials, resources, and recruitment and promotional materials, instructional design development, training facilitation and mentoring costs, marketing, recruitment and outreach, laptops for 5 staff members, software, and subscriptions.

TRAVEL

Domestic Travel

All travel will be in accordance with University travel regulations and mileage will be charged at the current rate on the date of travel. Travel estimates are based on costs that were incurred on previous projects of a similar nature for federal and state agencies. Funds in the amount of \$10,000 per year for startup through year 3 are requested from VDOE for a total of \$40,000 over the five-year period. Travel estimates include costs for transportation, lodging, per diem, and other related expenses. Travel may be incurred by lab school leadership, researchers, or staff to attend conferences or symposium, visit or collaborate with other lab schools, participate in meetings, or engage with potential partners. Funds will be spent according to GSA rate guidelines for hotel, M&E, and other related expenses.

CONSULTING/PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Consultant/Professional Services

Funds are requested from VDOE for industry expert, instructional design, and evaluation consultants. The requested support from VDOE is \$240,000 with \$170,000 requested during the startup year. Consultants will be selected initially from the computing sciences industry but as the lab school scales

up may also be selected from the education or healthcare industries. Consultants will have current industry experience and will assist on the following tasks including curriculum consultation and development, micro-credential development, internship placement facilitation, mentorship, or arranging/facilitating site visits for lab school students. Consultants will be selected, and hourly rates determined after this proposal is funded. Hourly rates will be determined based on expertise and specific tasks agreed upon.

OTHER DIRECT COSTS

Participant/Trainee Support

Funds are requested from VDOE for stipends for teachers to attend professional learning and technical support sessions as well as micro-credentialing costs. Teacher stipends are budgeted for 30 teachers/year with a \$1,000 stipend (\$30,000 per year) and a 5-year total of \$150,000. Micro-credentialing costs are budgeted for \$250 each for 30 teachers/year (\$7,500 per year) with a 5-year total of \$37,500. When possible, professional learning will also be offered in the summer. Core subject teachers as well as teachers/faculty who teach PBL IT coursework will be included in this category.

Substitute Teacher Payments

When appropriate and in some cases, this will be paid directly to the district for reimbursement of substitute teachers. When calculating the rate for substitutes, Mason will use the rate of pay currently used by Loudoun County Public Schools (approximately \$154/day) for 30 teachers/year (\$4,620 per year) with a 5-year total of \$23,100 requested from VDOE.

Research Subject Payments – for Recruitment & Feedback

Funds are requested from VDOE for \$45,000 over 5 years for recruitment and feedback incentive payments. \$200/teacher for 30 teachers each year (\$6,000 per year) will be used as recruitment incentives while \$100/teacher for 30 teachers each year (\$3,000 per year) will be used for survey and focus group feedback incentives.

Workshop & Professional Development Event Support - Funds in the amount of \$10,000 per year are requested to support catered meals for workshops and professional development events for a total of \$50,000. Funds in the amount of \$5,000 per year are requested for Facility and AV Equipment Rentals for a total of \$25,000. Total Funds requested from VDOE to support professional development events \$75,000.

GRA Health Insurance & Institutional (Tuition) Allowances

Tuition is requested for each student during the academic year for 18 credits each (total of 36) at a rate of \$600.60/credit for a total of \$21,622 in year 1. A 5% escalation rate will apply each year to tuition for a total of \$93,192 for years 1- 4. GMU will provide in-kind funds to support these costs.

A mandatory student fee of \$155 per credit hour is also included for 18 credits per student each year for a total of 36 credits and \$5,580 per year and \$22,320 over the four-year period for each student. GMU will provide in kind funds to support these costs.

Full-Time Graduate Student Health Benefits are budgeted at \$3,294/year for students who meet the minimum requirements for a total of \$26,352 for four years. GMU will provide in kind funds to support these costs.

FACILITIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS (F&A)

George Mason University has a predetermined F&A rate of 27.3%, Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC), approved by the Office of Naval Research for off campus adjacent other sponsored activities. Participant support costs, rental of Facilities and AV equipment, graduate student tuition and health insurance have all been excluded from the MTDC base. A total of \$889,448 is requested from VDOE over the project period to cover costs associated with the operations of the lab school that include the use of university resources such as legal counsel, human resources and payroll, technology support services, server space and equipment, facilities, utilities, risk management and insurance, sponsored programs administration, etc. With GMU using a MTDC base, the facilities and administrative costs requested from VDOE will be roughly 17% of the \$5,199,991 total projected expenditures.

Total Funds Requested from VDOE: \$4,360,000

Total Funds needed for sustainability by 2029-2030: \$840,000

Total Lab School Partnership Budget for 6 years: \$5,200,000

2. Start-up and five-year cash flow projections with clearly stated assumptions and indications of short- and long-term sources of revenue.

The ACCESS Academy will be offered at NOVA Loudoun, with an estimated cost per pupil of \$7,000, which covers all services provided to students by Loudoun County Public Schools. The cost per pupil is slightly higher given the novelty and innovation this school requires and the higher cost of living experienced in the northern Virginia area. GMU will provide in-kind resources and make pro-active efforts to secure external gift and grant funds for the project by the 2029-2030 school year. Dual enrollment courses that fulfill VDOE graduation requirements will be offered through NOVA Community College, which has a reimbursement agreement with the Commonwealth of Virginia.

3. Evidence of anticipated fundraising contributions, if applicable.

George Mason University has a robust and highly professional fundraising team generating over \$100 million in gifts and pledges in each of the last five years. A diversified, yet coordinated, fundraising program ensures that each College is a leading participant in this annual production. Philanthropic support will be sought for the lab school to enhance programming, to support advanced research and evaluation necessary to demonstrate effectiveness and the ability to scale, and to ensure high quality internships for students. Quantitative and qualitative research funding will also be sought as part of our sponsored research agenda and strategy. The college has already begun conversations with potential donors. Google, Inc has expressed interest in support for evaluation and best practices that will be necessary to scale the lab school project. Similarly, we are in discussions with Arnold Ventures who have strong interest in the lab school concept combined with Mason's ADVANCE program.

4. A description of the insurance coverage that the school will obtain. Types of insurance include general liability, health, and property.

George Mason University is an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia and is self-insured by the Commonwealth of Virginia Risk Management Plan for all claims up to the maximum provided by the Code of Virginia for general liability and property. The Commonwealth of Virginia provides health insurance coverage to George Mason University employees.

5. A justification for each type of insurance coverage sought and evidence that the applicant has consulted with the affiliated public or private institution of higher education to ensure that the level of coverage is satisfactory.

Existing liability and property coverage provided under the Commonwealth of Virginia Risk Management is extended to support ACCESS Academy operations. Evidence of coverage is provided via a Certificate of Liability Coverage memorandum.

6. A sound facilities plan, including backup or contingency plans. Facilities information includes (1) the provision of suitable instructional space; (2) provisions for library services; (3) provisions for the safe administration and storage of student records and medications; (4) information regarding compliance with building and fire codes and compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act; (5) general information on emergency evacuation plans; (6) information regarding site location and preparation; (7) the structure of operation and maintenance services; and (8) financial arrangements for facilities, including any lease arrangements with school divisions or other entities and whether debt will be incurred.

Students attending ACCESS Academy will be enrolled **in their home school division**. This includes access to all required components **that students not attending the lab school in their home school division access**. When lab school students attend courses at NOVA or Mason, they will continue to have access to all the resources at their base high school. At this time, it is not anticipated that there will be a need for financial agreements for facilities, including any lease agreements. NOVA Loudoun has identified available and suitable instructional space to launch and support ACCESS Academy for courses across all content areas.

Library services will be available onsite at NOVA Loudoun as part of the typical school day and staffed by a number of librarians. The library is easily accessible from the learning areas and provides opportunities for individual and group study and research. Resources included in the library include reading/browsing stacks, computer areas, multimedia storage, meeting areas, and electronic resource areas.

NOVA Loudoun includes a records vault, as required by Loudoun County Public Schools Educational Specifications **and other school divisions** for the safe storage of student records. Storage facilities are also built into appropriate classrooms and departmental areas of the building for safe storage of testing and instructional materials. NOVA Loudoun is also equipped with a Health Clinic. The Health Clinic is available for safe administration and storage of medications and is staffed with licensed and qualified personnel to provide services to students.

NOVA Loudoun is in compliance with building and fire codes. Regular fire safety inspections are performed by the Loudoun County Fire Marshall to ensure safety compliance. NOVA Facilities Services is responsible for routine preventive and corrective building & grounds maintenance services, facilities infrastructure repair & replacement, and energy conservation.

NOVA Loudoun is located in the heart of Loudoun County. The location offers convenient access to major roads, including Route 7 and Route 28. This allows for convenient access to students within Loudoun County and surrounding jurisdictions. The campus includes several athletic playing fields.

LCPS Central Offices will support ACCESS Academy for instructional services, special services, transportation, and professional development. The LCPS School Board received the planning grant application on February 22, 2024. It was also shared and discussed with individual board members during weekly meetings and co-presented by LCPS staff and Mason representatives at a public meeting of the Specialized programs and Centers (SPC) Committee on March 5, 2024. Letters of support have been provided by the LCPS Superintendent and the Board Chair.

7. A description of whether transportation services will be provided. If transportation is to be provided, please indicate whether the school will contract for transportation with the local education agency or another entity. Please indicate whether transportation will be provided to all students attending the school.

LCPS will provide transportation services consistent with transportation services available to all students in the division for students attending the lab school from Loudoun County Public Schools. They will also provide transportation for field trips and related programming which may take lab school students to FUSE at Mason Square. Students from other school divisions who attend the lab school will have transportation arranged through their home school division.

8. A description of transportation services for students with disabilities. (Section [22.1-221](#) A of the *Code of Virginia* states that “[e]ach disabled child enrolled in and attending a special education program provided by the school division pursuant to any of the provisions of § [22.1-216](#) or § [22.1-218](#) shall be entitled to transportation to and from such school or class at no cost if such transportation is necessary to enable such child to obtain the benefit of educational programs and opportunities.”)

Loudoun County Public Schools will provide transportation services consistent with transportation services available to all students, including students with disabilities, in the division and in accordance with local, state, and federal guidance and laws including the provisions of § 22.1-216 or § 22.1-218. LCPS will also provide transportation for field trips and related programming which may take lab school students to FUSE at Mason Square. Students from other school divisions who attend the lab school will have transportation arranged through their home school division.

9. A description of food service operations and all other significant operational or ancillary services to be provided.

Loudoun County Public Schools will provide food services to ACCESS Academy students during the school day consistent with food services available to all other students in the division.

VI. Placement Plan: The following components must be addressed:

1. Identification of a member of the school's leadership who will serve as a single point of contact for all activities that may need to take place in order for the school to close, including but not limited to the transfer of students to another school, the management of student records, and the settlement of financial obligations. Please include contact's name, title, email address, and phone number.

Ingrid Guerra-López, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Education and Human Development
George Mason University
iguerral@gmu.edu
703-993-2004

2. A notification process for parents/guardians of students attending the school and teachers and administrators of the termination or revocation of the contract.

A systemized notification process will be used if ACCESS Academy should close. After official notification to the Virginia Department of Education, a phone call will be made to each parent/guardian with a child enrolled in the school. This call will be followed by an official letter from the Director of ACCESS Academy.

3. A notification process to parents/guardians of students attending the college partnership laboratory school of alternative public school placements within a set time period from the date of termination or revocation of the contract.

In addition to the process described above, a letter will be sent to the Director of the ACCESS Academy school site, copied to the division superintendents of all attending students.

4. Provisions for ensuring that student records are provided to the parent or guardian or another school identified by the parent or guardian within a set time period. If the student transfers to another school division, provisions for the transfer of the student's record to the school division to which the student transfers upon the request of that school division. (See § [22.1-289](#) of the *Code of Virginia*).

In accordance with § [22.1-289](#) of the Code of Virginia, student records will be available to parents upon request, and records will be transferred upon request to another school division within two weeks. The Director of the lab school will handle transcript requests to transfer records to requesting school divisions.

5. A placement plan for school employees that details the level of assistance to be provided within a set period of time from the termination or revocation of the contract.

In the event that a decision is made to end the lab school program and close ACCESS Academy, students and their families, faculty, and staff will be notified of the closure and arrangements made to allow students to complete their course of study at Mason. Dependent upon the type of employment

contract and/or category personnel are hired under for the lab school, there is the possibility of reassignment to another unit within the University, based upon University needs and the qualifications and experience of said personnel.

6. A close-out plan related to financial obligations and audits, the termination of contracts and leases, and the sale and disposition of assets within a set period of time from the termination or revocation of the contract. The plan shall include the disposition of the schools' records and financial accounts upon closure.

George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College will follow the standard procedure as required by SCHEV and SACS-COC for closure of a program. SACS-COC requires a teach out for programs that are closing. There are no other agreements that will require dissolution.

The Code of Virginia, §42.1-85, requires that Mason establish and maintain an active, continuing program for the economical and efficient management of records. George Mason University is required to adhere to all schedules published by the Library of Virginia. Employees of Mason are responsible for ensuring that University Records are preserved, maintained, and accessible throughout their lifecycle. Virginia records laws and retention schedules are applicable to all public officers and employees with the goal to promote and ensure that the procedures used to manage and preserve public records will be consistent throughout all state agencies. Information on records retention and disposition schedules especially pertinent to colleges and universities in the Commonwealth are found in General Schedule GS-111 (https://www.lva.virginia.gov/agencies/records/sched_state/GS-111.pdf).

VIII. Other Assurances and Requirements: The following components should be addressed:

1. A description of the college partnership laboratory school's policies and procedures for compliance with the federal *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* and records retention schedules consistent with guidance issued by the Library of Virginia.

ACCESS Academy will operate under George Mason University Policy 1122 (<https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/ferpa-compliance/>) which outlines records retention and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The lab school will also follow the regulations set forth in the policies of the Library of Virginia.

2. Evidence that the proposed college partnership laboratory school programs, services, and activities will operate in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, including the *Virginia Freedom of Information Act*.

Mason, NOVA, and LCPS currently operate in accordance with all federal and state laws and regulations including the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. Mason's policy for responding freedom of information requests is University Policy 1117 (<https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responding-to-virginia-freedom-of-information-act-foia-requests-for-records/>) and those wishing to obtain public records can obtain additional information through this link: <https://www.gmu.edu/about/integrity-and-standards/FOIA>.

The relevant links for NOVA and LCPS concerning FOIA and the Virginia Freedom of Information Act are also provided below.

NOVA FOIA Policy and Record Request Information -

<https://www.nvcc.edu/foia/#:~:text=NOVA%20provides%20some%20of%20the,the%20remainder%20of%20the%20record>

LCPS FOIA Policy and Record Request Information -

<https://www.lcps.org/foia>

3. A listing of all waivers to state regulations needed for the college partnership laboratory school at the time of its opening. This does not preclude a college partnership laboratory school from requesting additional waivers once the school is operational.

At the current time, ACCESS Academy does not intend to apply for any waivers.

4. A description of any collaborative partnerships that may be made with public school divisions to enhance opportunities for all Virginia students, from preschool to postsecondary. An educational program provided to students enrolled in a public school division pursuant to a collaborative partnership between the college partnership laboratory school and the public school division shall be considered to be the educational program of the public school division for purposes of the SOA. (See § [22.1-349.3](#) G of the *Code of Virginia*.)

George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College currently partner with Loudoun County Public Schools to provide academic programming opportunities to their students. Loudoun County Public Schools offers many dual enrollment pathways and students are able to take college courses that apply to transferable credits, certificates, and degrees in a variety of subject areas. These programs are listed in the LCPS Program of Studies and currently open to all qualified students. ACCESS Academy will offer specialized on and off ramps combining dual enrollment and information technology coursework with innovative pedagogical practices. Relationships and collaborative partnerships will also be established with sending school districts to ensure smooth operation of the lab school, enhanced opportunities for students, and facilitate cooperation with transcript and other requests.

5. A description of all agreements that the applicant may need in the contract with the Board related to the release of the college partnership laboratory school from state regulations, consistent with the requirements in § [22.1-349.3](#) B of the *Code of Virginia*, including the approval of an Individual School Accreditation Plan. Section [22.1-349.4](#) of the *Code of Virginia* states that “[i]f the college partnership laboratory school application proposes a program to increase the educational opportunities for at-risk students, the Board of Education may approve an Individual School Accreditation Plan for the evaluation of the performance of the school.”

n/a

6. A description of how the applicant and members of the governing board will disclose any conflicts of interest, which would include a personal interest in any transactions involving the college partnership laboratory school, including information regarding

the frequency with which such disclosures will be made. (See § [2.2-3114](#) of the *Code of Virginia*.)

The board will be required to submit all disclosures regarding financial conflicts of interest on an annual basis. ACCESS Academy will comply with federal regulations and utilize policies and procedures already established by George Mason's Office of Research Integrity and Assurance and according to University Policy Number 4001 (<https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/financial-conflicts-of-interest-in-university-contracts-with-businesses-under-virginia-law/>).

7. Conflict of interest disclosure(s) by the applicant and/or members of the governing board in the proposed school. This includes any relationships that parties may have with vendors performing services at the school.

There are no conflicts of interest to disclose at this time.

Part C: Assurances

Assurances in the Code of Virginia: The assurances in the *Code of Virginia* represent the policies and procedures that must be developed and addressed in the application by the college partnership laboratory school to carry out the provisions of the law. By signing and submitting this application for a college partnership laboratory school, the applicant expressly assures the Board of the following:

No tuition will be charged to students attending the college partnership laboratory school, except as described in subsection E of § [22.1-349.3](#) of the *Code of Virginia*. The school will be nonreligious in its admission policies, employment practices, instruction, and all other operations.

The proposed college partnership laboratory school programs, services, and activities will operate in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations (including the federal *Americans with Disabilities Act*, the federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act*, Section 504 of the federal *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, and the *Virginia Freedom of Information Act*) and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services.

The applicant will take all actions necessary to enter into a contract with the Board no later than nine (9) months prior to the opening date of the college partnership laboratory school.

The school leadership of the college partnership laboratory school will be retained on contract no later than six (6) months prior to the opening date of the school.

An assurance that the applicant will meet the condition in § [22.1-349.9](#) of the *Code of Virginia*, which state that “teachers who work in a college partnership laboratory school shall hold a license issued by the Board or, in the case of an instructor in the Board-approved teacher education program of the institution of higher education, be eligible to hold a Virginia teaching license. Teachers working in a college partnership laboratory school shall be subject to the requirements of §§ [22.1-296.1](#), [22.1-296.2](#), and [22.1-296.4](#) applicable to teachers employed by a local school board.”

All initial requests for waivers from the Board will be made no later than six (6) months prior to the opening date of the school. (This does not preclude a college partnership laboratory school from working with the local school board to request additional waivers once the school is operational.)

The applicant must assure knowledge of the *Virginia State and Local Government Conflict of Interest Act* (§ [2.2-3100 et seq.](#) of the *Code of Virginia*) and the applicable Virginia public procurement law (§ [23.1-1017](#) of the *Code of Virginia* and Chapters 76 and 77 of the Acts of Assembly of 2021, Special Session 1).

Assurances approved by the Virginia Board of Education: By signing and submitting this application for a college partnership laboratory school, the applicant expressly assures the Board of the following:

If this application is approved, the applicant will take all actions necessary to enter into a contract with the Board not later than nine (9) months prior to the opening date of the college partnership laboratory school.

If the application is approved, the leadership of the college partnership laboratory school will be retained on contract no later than six (6) months prior to the opening date of the school.

All initial requests for waivers from the Board will be made by the local school board, on behalf of the applicant, no later than six (6) months prior to the opening date of the school. (This does not preclude a college partnership laboratory school from working with the Board to request additional waivers once the school is operational.)

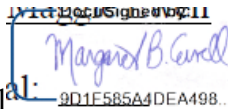
The applicant assures knowledge of the *Virginia State and Local Government Conflict of Interest Act* (§ [2.2-3100 et seq.](#) of the *Code of Virginia*) and the applicable Virginia public procurement law (§ [23.1-1017](#) of the *Code of Virginia* and Chapters 76 and 77 of the Acts of Assembly of 2021, Special Session 1).

Pursuant to the requirements, I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, the information in this application is correct; the applicant has addressed all application elements that pertain to the proposed college partnership laboratory school; and that the applicant understands and will comply with the assurances listed above.

Name of Authorized Official: Maggie Ewell

Title: Director, Pre-Award

Signature of Authorized Official

A digital signature block for Maggie Ewell. It features a blue ink signature of "Maggie Ewell" over a white rectangular background. Above the signature, the text "Virginia Board of Education" is visible. Below the signature, there is a small alphanumeric string "9D1E585A4DEA498...".

Date: _____



Office of the Provost

4400 University Drive, MS 3A2, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-8770

August 9, 2023

Attn: College Partnership Lab School Standing Committee

Re: George Mason University College Partnership Laboratory School Application

Dear Review Committee Members:

On behalf of George Mason University's (GMU), I am pleased submit this letter of strong support our university's application for a College Partnership Laboratory School.

Our proposed *ACCESS Academy* will enhance the Commonwealth's ability to provide all students, including those who have been traditionally underserved, with opportunities to pursue two- and four-year college degrees. It also is intended to enhance their earning potential upon high school graduation through focused development of employability skills and paid internships. This will be attained in collaboration with industry partners in high-demand and well-compensated jobs, with an emphasis on information technology fields.

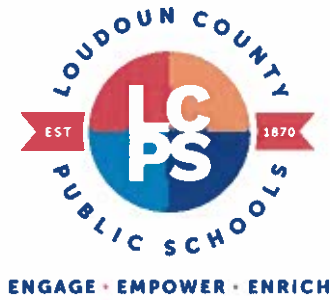
The proposed ACCESS Academy will leverage the combined strengths of our partnership with Fairfax County Public Schools and Northern Virginia Community College. It also will leverage our proven track record of engaging seamless high school to college pathways that provide students with critical wrap-around services, such as the ADVANCE partnership between GMU and the Northern Virginia Community College. This initiative also will integrate pedagogical innovations, such as an integration of problem-based learning with state-of-the-art research and technologies, as well as collaborating with industry to prepare well-trained and highly-skilled employees in fields that emphasize information technology.

We look forward to your review. We also would be pleased to provide any additional information that you may request of require.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark R. Ginsberg".

Mark R. Ginsberg, Ph.D.
Provost, Executive Vice President and Professor



Lab School Application Committee
c/o Dr. Ingrid Guerra-López
College of Education and Human Development
George Mason University
4400 University Drive, MS 2F1
Fairfax, VA 22030

February 28, 2024

Dear Review Committee Members:

On behalf of the Loudoun County School Board, I am pleased to submit this letter of support for George Mason University's application for a College Partnership Laboratory School with Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) as a school district partner.

I understand that the proposed Accelerated College and Employability Skills (ACCESS) Academy will provide at-risk students in Loudoun County with educational opportunities that will lead to high-demand and well-compensated career opportunities in informational technology. The plan for students to simultaneously complete their high school requirements while accessing quality experiences that will lead to certifications and two- and four-year degrees is an innovative approach that will lead to our students being successful after high school.

ACCESS Academy will also increase our students' earning potential upon high school graduation through its concentrated development of employability skills and internships. I look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with George Mason University on this project. It would be a meaningful addition to our school district that would have a life-changing impact on the lives of LCPS students.

Sincerely,

Melinda Mansfield
School Board Chair
Loudoun County School Board

Lab School Application Committee
c/o Dr. Ingrid Guerra Lopez
College of Education and Human Development
George Mason University
4400 University Drive, MSN-XXX
Fairfax, VA 22030

August 3, 2023

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), we are pleased to express our support for George Mason University's (GMU) College Partnership Laboratory School Application as a collaborating partner institution. We understand that the proposed Access Academy will provide exemplary educational experiences leading toward certificates, two- and four-year degrees to traditionally underserved students who have not historically had access to high-demand and well-compensated jobs in Information Technology fields. The four pillars of ACCESS Academy 1) wrap around supports, 2) innovative teaching and learning methods in problem-based learning, 3) transdisciplinary collaboration, and 4) learn and earn opportunities, along with intentional co-development of curriculum and work-based learning experiences with industry partners will provide transformative opportunities for participating 9th-12th grade students.

NOVA has a long history of mutually beneficial partnership activities with GMU, and the opportunity to collaborate on this innovative endeavor for underserved students is consistent with the mission, vision, and strategic plans of both institutions. Specifically, the mission and vision of ACCESS Academy align with NOVA Strategic Plan Goal 2: Objective 3: *Develop comprehensive, fully integrated informed pathways for every program to ensure seamless transitions from high school and other entry points to NOVA and NOVA to four-year transfer institutions of the workforce.* ACCESS Academy will leverage the strengths of Fairfax County Public Schools, NOVA and GMU to address market demands, open pathways for traditionally underserved students, and prepare highly skilled employees in Information Technology fields.

This letter confirms our commitment as a partner in the proposal being offered by George Mason University for collaboration around the establishment of ACCESS Academy. We support our faculty and leaders' continued engagement in this initiative, as we believe participation will be transformative not only for underserved students seeking careers in Information Technologies, but also in terms of our engagement with industry leaders, and university faculties' pedagogy and practices in problem-based learning. We look forward to this new dimension of our partnership.

Sincerely,



Eun-Woo Chang, Ph.D.
Vice President of Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer
Northern Virginia Community College

Vice President for Academic Affairs/ and Chief Academic Officer

4001 Wakefield Chapel Road, Annandale, VA 22003

Phone: 703-323-3459

www.nvcc.edu www.cao.nvcc.edu



Lab School Application Committee
c/o Dr. Ingrid Guerra-López
College of Education and Human Development
George Mason University
4400 University Drive, MS 2F1
Fairfax, VA 22030

February 16, 2024

Dear Review Committee Members:

On behalf of Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS), we are pleased to support George Mason University's College Partnership Laboratory School application as a collaborating partner. We understand that the proposed Accelerated College and Employability Skills (ACCESS) Academy will provide innovative educational experiences for students that will lead to certifications and two- and four-year degrees as well as support at-risk students who have not historically had access to high-demand and well-compensated jobs in information technology fields.

The innovative problem-based learning curriculum combined with work-based learning experiences, credit and credentialing opportunities, wraparound support, and industry partnerships will provide transformative opportunities for many of our LCPS students. The mission and vision are also consistent with our mission, vision, and core values.

Loudoun County Public Schools has a long history of partnership with George Mason University and the opportunity to collaborate on this innovative project is consistent with our Strategic Plan (ONE LCPS 2027), specifically *Goal 1, Empowered Students – Action 1.2 Multiple, Accessible Pathways to Success: LCPS will expand student access to participate in specialized educational opportunities.*

This letter confirms our commitment as a school district partner for the proposal being offered by George Mason University. We look forward to the opportunity to bring ACCESS Academy to LCPS students and families and offer a program that will allow our students to learn skills that will prepare them for high-demand careers.

Sincerely,

Aaron Spence, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Loudoun County Public Schools



Google LLC
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway
Mountain View, CA 94043

650 253-0000 main
Google.com

April 23, 2024

Dear Lab School Committee Members:

Google is excited to support the Accelerated College and Employability Skills (ACCESS) Academy, the partnership among George Mason University (Mason), Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), and Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) because it will use an early college model to enact three foundational innovations intended to support the transition of traditionally underrepresented, underserved learners into high demand careers, with a primary focus on technology.

The mission of ACCESS Academy is to provide new innovative pathways for traditionally underserved students toward high demand, well compensated careers, while simultaneously working toward two- and four-year degrees to maximize their earning potential over their work life. Google fully endorses this mission.

In addition to serving as an industry resource, Google will make available free licenses for our novel credentialing course - AI Essentials. Each Lab School Student will have access to the 20-hour course and completion certificate free of charge. This in-kind donation is part of a larger offering to George Mason University of 500 licenses and is valued at up to \$120,000.

In addition, Google has provided philanthropic support to the College of Education and Human Development to support the creation and build of the Lab School. This \$125,000 gift is an early commitment, and the College is invited to submit proposals for additional support for the project. Discussions are already underway.

ACCESS Academy recognizes the urgent need for transformative education to empower at-risk students. By offering innovative pathways that lead to high-demand careers, alongside certificates and college degrees, they are paving the way for a brighter future. Google is equally committed to this goal, and we look forward to a robust partnership with George Mason University's College of Education and Human Development and ACCESS Academy.

Sincerely,

Esther Owolabi
DMV Education Partnerships Manager
Google LLC

April 19, 2024

Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of Education
James Monroe Building
101 N 14th St
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Lab School Committee Members:

Connected DMV is pleased to provide this letter of support for the Accelerated College and Employability Skills (ACCESS) Academy, led by George Mason University (Mason), in partnership with Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) and Loudon County Public Schools (LCPS).

Our organization helps solve complex regional challenges and deliver results that empower and enrich the lives of all. We work together toward a shared vision to develop new, transformational approaches that eliminate social inequities and renew economic prosperity throughout our region.

Connected DMV is dedicated to increasing access to tech talent and STEM education. Since 2020, Connected DMV has been organizing and hosting the DMV K14 Working Group which consists of key K12 and 2YI educational institutions (including GMU, NVCC and LCPS) with a focus on increasing collaboration, developing alternate pathways to careers, and increasing access to emerging technology opportunities. The innovative problem-based learning curriculum proposed for the ACCESS Academy, combined with work-based learning experiences, credit and credentialing opportunities, and wraparound support, aligns to the regional ambition and will provide transformative opportunities for traditionally underrepresented, underserved learners. Connected DMV strongly supports the ACCESS application, and we look forward to collaborating with George Mason University on this effort.

Sincerely,



George D. Thomas
President

April 22, 2024

Dear Lab School Committee Members:

Peraton is pleased to provide this letter of support for the Accelerated College and Employability Skills (ACCESS) Academy, led by George Mason University (Mason), in partnership with Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) and Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS).

At Peraton, we firmly believe that Peraton's business outcomes, customer solutions, and community partnerships are better as a result of the unique backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences that our employees bring to Peraton each and every day. We are committed to making a positive impact in the Northern Virginia communities where many of our employees and their families live and work.

Peraton is dedicated to increasing access to tech talent and computing education. The innovative problem-based learning curriculum proposed for the *lab school*, combined with work-based learning experiences, credit and credentialing opportunities, and wraparound support, will provide transformative opportunities for traditionally underrepresented, underserved learners. Peraton strongly supports the ACCESS application, and we look forward to collaborating with George Mason University on this effort.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "L Salguero".

Laila Salguero
Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer