



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item: B

Date: June 10, 2024

Title: Aerospace Academy of the Eastern Shore (AAES) Lab School– VDOE Documentation of Complete and Compliant Application

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

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Purpose of Presentation

Review of documentation of complete and compliant Laboratory School Application for the Aerospace Academy of the Eastern Shore, a laboratory school proposal from a collaboration among Old Dominion University, Eastern Shore Community College, and the school divisions of Accomack County Public Schools and Northampton County Public Schools.

Executive Summary

The laboratory school application entitled **Aerospace Academy of the Eastern Shore (AAES)** (“AAES Application”) was received from Old Dominion University (“Applicants”) on May 29, 2024. In accordance with the Laboratory School Application Process, the AAES application was reviewed for completion and compliance by the Application Review Technical Expert Committee, a team of Virginia Department of Education Subject Matter Experts (“VDOE SME”). The goal of the Application Review Technical Expert Committee is to document the needed technical expertise and provide counseling to the Applicants to identify and correct any potential deficiencies in the planning and implementation of the proposed College Partnership Laboratory School, determine compliance with state law or regulation, highlight potential problems or red flags with information contained in the AAES application, and to identify aspects of the proposal that are especially exciting or unique.

Dr. Andy Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent of Strategic Innovation, coordinated the efforts of the VDOE SME team who reviewed the AAES Application for completeness and compliance. The VDOE SME team responsible for reviewing the AAES application was comprised of the following VDOE staff:

- Dr. Andrew Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent
- Claire Bremner, Coordinator of Innovation

- Sofia McDaniel (Department of Strategic Innovation)
- Dr. Michelle Wallace (Department of Instruction)
- Shawna LeBlond (Office of Licensure and School Leadership)
- Jason Ellis (Office of Accountability)
- Edward Lanza (Office of Budgeting)
- Erin Madden (Office of Policy)
- Melissa Velasquez (Department of Policy and Communications)
- Dr. Samantha Hollins (Department of Special Education and Student Services)
- Dr. Dave Myers (Office of Data, Research and Technology)

Each VDOE SME was provided with the Laboratory School Criteria Checklist Worksheet. Areas of expertise were assigned to various staff subject to their education expertise at the VDOE. A compilation of these comments is included in the Excel spreadsheet entitled VDOE Completeness and Compliance Report (Attachment 2).

VDOE staff provided technical assistance to the AAES team during the development stage prior to submission of their application and following submission in preparation for Standing Committee review. Prior to application submission, technical assistance calls were held between VDOE and the AAES team on April 15, 2024; April 18, 2024; April 29, 2024; May 21, 2024, and May 28, 2024. Following submission of the application, a technical assistance call was held on May 30, 2024. An on-site visit to Eastern Shore Community College that included representatives from ODU, ESCC, NCPS, ACPS, VDOE, and the Governor’s Transformation Team took place on May 7, 2024. The first round of counseling from VDOE SME review was provided to the Applicants the week of May 27, 2024. A revised application was submitted to the VDOE on June 3, 2024, for completion of this report to the College Partnership Laboratory School Standing Committee (“Standing Committee”). Follow-up feedback has been provided to the Applicants.

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

Action Requested

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

VDOE Recommendation

The concept of a lab school designed collaboratively with local school divisions with a strong emphasis on project-based learning and hands-on approaches to cultivate computational

thinking, problem-solving, critical thinking abilities, and other essential skills crucial for success in aerospace industry and adjacent coursework by Old Dominion University is an innovative and desirable laboratory school program. The Aerospace Academy of the Eastern Shore seeks to develop well-rounded students by providing both the fundamentals of aerospace technology coupled with emphasis on critical thinking, ethical considerations, and developing strong communication skills. With the students remaining enrolled in their local school divisions, it appears AAES functions more as a program than a standalone Lab School. This is an acceptable approach to meeting the intent of the lab school concept.

The Applicants responded to initial feedback and coaching provided by the VDOE SME team, and provided the additional information requested. The Applicants have options for students including dual enrollment options, work-based and experiential learning, and virtual learning, with a sustainable governance structure, including a sustainable financial model for the operation of the lab school program.

Overall, the VDOE recommends that **AAES Lab School** is operational and ready to implement.

Previous Review or Action

No previous review or action by the Standing Committee.

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

Subsection A of § [22.1-349.6](#) of the Code of Virginia states, in part, that “[t]he Board shall establish procedures for receiving, reviewing, and ruling upon applications and shall make a copy of any such procedures available to all interested parties upon request. . . . The Board’s review procedures shall establish a review committee that may include experts with the operation of similar schools located in other states.”