



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item: C

Date: June 21, 2024

Title: First and Final Review of College Partnership Laboratory School
Application from Old Dominion University's Aerospace Academy of the
Eastern Shore (AAES)

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

Purpose of Presentation

Action required by state or federal law or regulation (i.e., a change in law requires a change in program requirements; this is part of a regulatory action).

Executive Summary

On May 29, 2024, Old Dominion University ("ODU") submitted a college partnership laboratory school ("lab school" or "ODU AAES Lab School") application for ODU's AAES lab school ("ODU application") for consideration by the Board of Education ("Board"). In accordance with the Board's [Guidelines for the Approval of College Partnership Laboratory Schools](#) and the [process](#) established by the Board's College Partnership Laboratory Schools Standing Committee ("Standing Committee"), the application was reviewed by a subject-matter expert group ("SME group") composed of staff of the Virginia Department of Education ("VDOE").

The VDOE SME group generated a completeness and compliance review ("compliance review"), which was submitted to the Standing Committee for review at its meeting on June 10, 2024.

The Standing Committee received the ODU application and completeness and compliance report, and it also asked questions of representatives from ODU after a detailed presentation from the ODU applicants including Dr. Karen Sanzo, Director of the Institute for Design Thinking and Leadership Development, Old Dominion University; Dr. Phil Reed, Professor Department of Educational Leadership & Workforce Development, Old Dominion University; and Dr. Maggie Barber, Associate Dean, Educator Preparation and Assessment

Darden College of Education & Professional Studies, Old Dominion University.

Dr. Andy Armstrong, on behalf of the VDOE, provided the Standing Committee with an overview of the objectives of the ODU AAES lab school, the VDOE Expert team completion and compliance process, as well as their compliance coaching and review of additional application materials received from ODU since their initial submission in May of 2024. The ODU applicants were present at the meeting and answered questions posed by the Standing Committee at final review. The Standing Committee unanimously approved First and Final Review of the ODU application to be forwarded for consideration by the Virginia Board of Education.

VDOE staff posted the ODU application for the 10-day public comment period on June 10, and it remained available until June 20. No comment was received.

Prior to the Standing Committee's First and Final Review on June 10, 2024, VDOE staff provided technical assistance to the ODU AAES lab school team 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 application proposes for ODU to begin a lab school in collaboration and partnership with Accomack County Public School and Northampton County Public Schools. The proposed lab school named "ODU AAES Lab School" is an innovative interdisciplinary lab school model that focuses on providing career exposure to students through real-world problem solving in collaboration with higher education professionals, pre-service college students, and industry experts. 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. Students remain enrolled in their home school division while being provided with several options to engage in career exploration, including innovative aerospace focused curriculum. This innovative introduction to STEM is coupled with engaging opportunities for students, supported by a wide network of community supporters.

Instruction will be administered in a hands-on environment and include simultaneous teaching by ACS staff, NCPS staff, ODU faculty and pre-service students, and industry experts. The lab school would address multiple desirable outcomes for students, future teachers, and regional schools with hiring needs, including the following:

- Students will engage in high-level application of real-world problem-solving while working closely with a team of experts from both industry and the higher education partners.
- ODU's AAES lab school will provide a space for innovation where educators, industry, and pre-service professionals can explore best practices in teaching and learning.
- Students will engage in coursework aligned with personal interest and regional market demand industry and business, streamlining the pipeline for high-wage, high-skill, high-demand employment in the region served by the Lab School.

The Lab School statutes favor control by the institute of Higher Education. The governance structure of the ODU AAES Lab School meets those criteria. VDOE SME team will continue to advise ODU on meeting statutory compliance within the Applicant's constitution, governance, and bylaws.

The approval of lab schools aligns with Priority 4 of the Board's *Comprehensive Plan 2024–2029*: to create innovative pathways for every learner.

Action Requested

First and final review: Action requested at this meeting.

Superintendent's Recommendation

Based on the recommendations from the Standing Committee, the Superintendent of Public Instruction ("Superintendent") recommends that the Board of Education waives first review and approve the ODU lab school application for a five-year contract period with annual reviews.

The Superintendent further recommends that the Board delegate to the President of the Board and the Superintendent final negotiation of the college partnership laboratory school contract with ODU, including awarding start-up funds and up to \$5 million in per-pupil funding from the College Partnership Laboratory School Fund in accordance with the [Board's Guidelines and Criteria for the Award and Distribution of Lab School Start-Up and Per-Pupil Operating Funding Grants for Approved Lab Schools](#).

Rationale for Action

The ODU lab school proposal partners with Accomack County Public Schools and Northampton County Public Schools. Additionally, the proposal has undergone a thorough review process by the Standing Committee. Approval at the June 21, 2024, meeting of the Board is critical to allowing the lab school to immediately engage in start-up activities in order to open for the 2025-2026 school year.

Previous Review or Action

The ODU application has undergone review by the Board’s Standing Committee:

Date: June 10, 2024

Action: First and Final Review of College Partnership Laboratory School Application from Old Dominion University.

Background Information and Statutory Authority

[Chapter 19.1](#) of Title 22.1 of the Code of Virginia sets the statutory requirements for lab schools and the process for approving such schools.

Section [22.1-349.6](#) requires the Board to “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. If the Board finds that the application is incomplete, the Board shall request the necessary additional information from the applicant. The Board's review procedures shall establish a review committee that may include experts with the operation of similar schools located in other states.”

In accordance with § [22.1-349.6](#), the Board has set the [Guidelines for the Approval of College Partnership Laboratory Schools](#). Moreover, in preparation for receiving applications, the Board re-formed the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee met from 2010–2013 and had new members appointed by the Board President in December 2022. The Standing Committee comprises five members: Joan Wodiska (Chair), Dr. Pam Moran (Vice-Chair), and John Bailey, as well as Board members Bill Hansen and Andy Rotherham.

The Standing Committee has had eight public meetings in 2023 and six in 2024. After each meeting, the Standing Committee has provided a report on progress to the Board. In its meetings, the Standing Committee has setup a process for reviewing applications, including a SME review by VDOE staff; standardized process documents, such as application rubrics, compliance reports, and reports to the Board; revised the lab school application; reviewed applications from multiple applicants; and received public comment.

Upon receiving the ODU lab school application on May 29, 2024, Dr. Andy Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent of Strategic Innovation for the Virginia Department of Education, convened a SME group in accordance with the process established by the Standing Committee.

The SME group was composed of the following individuals:

- Dr. Andrew Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent of Strategic Innovation
- Dr. Samantha Hollins, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services
- Ms. Melissa Velazquez, Assistant Superintendent of Policy and Communications
- Ms. Shawna LeBlond, Director, Office of Teacher Licensure
- Mr. Edward Lanza, Director of Budgeting
- Mr. Jason Ellis, Office of Student Performance and Support
- Ms. Claire Bremner, Coordinator of Innovation
- Ms. Sofia McDaniel, Senior Policy Analyst

The lab school application was reviewed by members of the SME group for completeness and compliance according to their areas of expertise. The compliance report was then provided to the Standing Committee for first and final review on June 10, 2024.

At review, the ODU applicants presented detailed information and insight to the Standing Committee on their plan for their lab school model. The Standing Committee queried the applicants on various portions of the application. The ODU applicants responded to all questions, and the Standing Committee approved first and final review and cleared the ODU application for the 10-day public comment posting period. The Standing Committee recommended the ODU application to advance to Board consideration for approval at the June 21, 2024, Board meeting.

At the Standing Committee meeting in June, Dr. Andy Armstrong stated ODU's AAES Lab School is compliant and ready to implement and recommended to the Committee that ODU's AAES Lab School be forwarded to the Virginia Board of Education for their consideration for approval at the June 21, 2024, meeting. The ODU applicants were present at the meeting to answer any questions posed by the Standing Committee at standing committee review. Satisfied with all ODU applicant responses to their inquiries, the Standing Committee endorsed the application and recommended the application be presented to the Board at its next meeting.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Standing Committee has provided opportunity for public comment on agenda items,

including the ODU application, at each of the meetings where the application was reviewed. Additionally, the application was posted for a 10-day public comment period in accordance with the Standing Committee's process. The public comment was announced through the [Virginia Education Update #2024-19](#).

The ODU lab school application has received letters of support from numerous stakeholders, which have been included in the materials for this item, including the following:

- Mr. Ian Brenson, School Board Member, Northampton County Public Schools
- Ms. Jo Ann P. Molera, School Board, Northampton County Public Schools
- Ms. Liz Jones, Chair, Northampton County School Board
- Ms. Kim Check, Executive Director, Virginia Space Flight Academy
- Ms. Janet Martin-Turner, School Board Chair, Accomack County Public Schools
- Dr. Rhonda Hall, Superintendent, Accomack County Public Schools
- Dr. Lisa Martin, Superintendent, Northampton County Public Schools

Implementation and Communication

Upon approval by the Board, VDOE staff will coordinate with the Office of the Attorney General to execute a contract between the Board and ODU to establish the lab school within 90 days, in accordance with § [22.1-349.5](#) of the Code of Virginia, as well as §§ [22.1-349.3\(C\)](#) and [22.1-349.4](#).

The approval of the lab school will be publicized through the VDOE, Old Dominion University, and participating school divisions.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources

This item will not impact resources at VDOE.