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# **School Division of Innovation**

## Application for School Division Designation



March 19, 2021

Virginia Department of Education
Department of Learning and Innovation

**Virginia Department of Education
SCHOOL DIVISIONS OF INNOVATION
Application for Division Designation**

**INTENT**

The intent of the School Divisionsof Innovation(SDI) designation is to encourage public school divisions to develop a divisionwide plan of action to challenge current methods and strategies in order to support the academic success of all students and educators. The plan for transformation may be small steps leading to larger changes or may be a complete overhaul of current structures and practices.

Any interested school division may develop a plan of innovation or write up a current plan of action to submit an application to be approved by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). School divisions may be in various stages of implementation.

**BACKGROUND**

The 2017 Virginia General Assembly approved House Bill 1981 (Greason), directing the Virginia Board of Education (Board) to develop regulations for the designation of SDI. To be eligible for designation, a local school board would submit a plan of innovation according to Board criteria as presented in the regulations. The legislation defines “innovation” as a new or creative alternative to existing instructional or innovative practices or school structures that evidence-based practice suggests will be effective in improving student learning and educational performance. A SDI is defined as a school division in which the local school board has developed and for which the Board has approved a plan of innovation to improve student learning; educational performance; and college, career, and citizenship readiness skills in one or more schools, for the benefit of all schools in the school division.

Per this directive, the Board initiated the regulatory review process beginning on September 28, 2017. The proposed regulations went through a two-year regulatory process and the Regulations Governing the Designation of School Divisions of Innovation
*8VAC20-760-20. School Division of Innovation Designation* (<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter760/section20/>) went into effect on September 19, 2019.

The regulations establish the procedure and criteria for the designation of a SDI and provide that the Superintendent of Public Instruction establish a format and timelines for local school boards to submit plans of innovation. Pursuant to the approved plan of innovation, a “SDI shall be exempted from selected regulatory provisions and permitted to adopt alternative policies for school administrators, teachers, and staff to meet the diverse needs of students.” The regulations prohibit any exemptions to regulations that are mandated by state or federal law or are designed to promote health or safety, special education regulations, and certain provisions in the Standards of Accreditation. The regulations also include provisions to evaluate the performance of a SDI, including revocation in the event that performance expectations, as included in the Goals and Performance Measures and Timeline sections, are not met.

**ELIGIBILITY**

All Virginia school divisions and full-time regional schools with a local school board, are eligible to apply for the SDI designation.

**REPORTING**

As established in the regulations, SDI are required to submit to the VDOE an annual report that provides information demonstrating progress toward meeting the goals and performance targets included in the approved plan of innovation. Reporting requirements and deadlines will be shared with SDI upon designation.

**TIMELINE**

Intent to Submit - **March 29, 2021**

Preapplication Meeting (webinar) - **April 2, 2021**

Application Due - **May 3, 2021**

Recommendation to the Board for Approval - **July 22, 2021**

The school division will submit the Intent-to-Submit form to fulfill the requirement to proceed with the application process, but it is not a formal commitment to submit. The Intent-to-Submit form is on page 8.

The school division will submit the completed School Division of Innovation application, as described in this application packet, to the VDOE **by May 3, 2021**

The VDOE will work through the school division’s designated SDI contact person, as provided by the division on page 9 of this application packet, for all matters related to the application. All contacts, negotiations, and notifications will be conducted through the school division designated contact person and the VDOE or their designated staff person(s).

**APPLICATION REVIEW**

VDOE staff will review applications per requirements as defined in this application. If, in the judgment of the VDOE, an application is late or incomplete, the application may be omitted from the process. The decision of the VDOE is final. Applicants submitting proposals that are rejected by the VDOE will be notified in writing.

Each section of the application will be given a point value of up to 5 points. Each section will be evaluated on clarity, thoroughness, and presentation of the innovations.

**REVIEW PROCESS FOR DESIGNATION**

VDOE staff will review applications and make recommendations to the Virginia Board of Education for approval. VDOE staff will notify the contact person/project director of the status of the school division’s designation prior to the Board’s review of the recommendation for approval.

School divisions that will be given the Designation as a School Division of Innovation will receive a competitive priority preference for the 2021 K-12 Innovation Grant process, a logo designation to be used on any marketing or communication messaging, and receive recognition by the Board of Education after the **July 22, 2021** Board Meeting, be included in a VDOE Press Release, and be highlighted on the VDOE and Virginia is for Learners websites.

**Reporting Requirements**

School divisions will need to provide annual updates to the Virginia Department of Education demonstrating progress toward meeting the goals and performance targets set forth in the initial application. The guidelines for the annual update will be provided upon designation as a School Division of Innovation.

 **REQUIRED APPLICATION COMPONENTS**

**Cover Page and Abstract**

* Completed Cover Page form, page 9, of the Application Forms section. The cover page must be the first page of the division’s application.
* All applications must include an application briefly describing the divisionwide plan of innovation including primary goals and performance measures.

**Rationale for Change**

Please describe the background, conditions, and rationale leading to the need for innovation in one or more schools of the school division. The rationale should include:

* an analysis of supporting student and teacher data, needs assessments, staff and/or community surveys, follow-up information on school graduates, and/or any other pertinent information; and
* information that indicates the school staff and the community are in support of the innovations to be developed in the proposal.

**Description of Innovations**

Provide a written description which includes:

* planned or implemented innovations including information related to connected research- and evidenced-based practices and programs; and
* how schools and students in the division will benefit from and share innovative practices for application in other schools.

**Goals and Performance Measurement**Description of the goals and performance targets/outcomes for the innovations and how they will be measured. This section should include, but not be limited to, how the program will:

* reduce achievement and opportunity gaps among groups of students by expanding the range of engaging and relevant learning experiences for students who are identified as academically low-achieving;
* create opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of learning and increase student learning through the implementation of high, rigorous standards for student performance and balanced assessments that measure both student growth and achievement;
* increase student participation in opportunities that enhance students' preparation for college, career, and citizenship;
* increase opportunities for students to learn from content experts through integrated course opportunities; or
* motivate students at all levels by offering additional curricular choices, personalized learning opportunities, and relevant student learning experiences such as community service projects, work-based learning opportunities, and job shadowing.

**Requests for Flexibility**

Pursuant to an approved plan of innovation, a SDI shall be exempted from selected regulatory provisions and permitted to adopt alternative policies for school administrators, teachers, and staff to meet the diverse needs of students. In this section, provide information related to requests for waivers that provide flexibility from regulatory provisions. Please note that exemptions from regulatory provisions are limited, as indicated in the regulations (<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter760/section30/>).
“*The Board shall not grant exemptions from the following:*

1. *Regulations mandated by state or federal law;*
2. *Regulations designed to promote health or safety;*
3. *Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia;*
4. *Student achievement expectations;*
5. *Requirements for graduation;*
6. *Program of instruction and learning objectives; or*
7. *Part VIII of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, School Accreditation.*”

**Training and Support**

This section should include an overview of how the division will fully prepare educators and educational leaders to implement the innovations and continue to support it after initial exposure through sustained professional development.

**Collaboration and Strategic Partnerships**

Describe the role of partnerships in expanding opportunities and engagement of students; academic and personal achievement; preparing them for “real-world” experiences and postsecondary success; and ensuring sustainability of the innovations.

**Communication**

Describe how the plan to systematically change education in your division will be communicated clearly to all stakeholders including the school board, community, parents, leadership, and educators. Identify advocates with connections in and beyond the organization and others who might have a network of influence to help division leads champion the work. Include ideas on how you plan to share successes and challenges externally with other school divisions.

**Evaluation and Reflection**

This section should describe the plan to use data to monitor and reflect on the efficacy of the innovations. Include information regarding measurement of fidelity and frequency of evaluation.

**Timeline and Plan for Sustainability**

This section should include at least a three-year timeline for implementation, discussion of possible challenges to implementation and sustainability, and a plan for future budget considerations. Timeline details should be provided on a quarterly basis.

**INTENT TO SUBMIT**

**School Division**:

**Superintenden**t:

**Division Contact Person**:

**Title**:
**Emai**l:

**Signature of Division Superintenden**t:

Submission of this form is a requirement to proceed with the application process, but it is not a formal commitment to submit an application. Please submit this form via email by 4 p.m. on Monday, **March 29, 2021** to instruction@doe.virginia.gov.

A **PRE-PROPOSAL WEBINAR** will be held on **April 2, 2021at 3:30 p.m**. Participation in the webinar is not a requirement for submission. Webinar information will be provided to the school division contact listed above regarding how to access the meeting. Please provide the number of people from your school division who will participate in the webinar:

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**APPLICATION COVER PAGE**

**School Division:**

**Superintendent’s Region:**

**Mailing Address:**

**Superintendent:**
**Email:**

**Division Contact Person:**

**Title:**

**Email:**

**Stage of Implementation:**

**Partnership(s):**

**CERTIFICATION BY AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL**

*The applicant certifies that to the best of his/her knowledge the information in this application is correct and that the filing of this application is duly authorized by the local school board of this School Division.*

**Typed or Printed Name of Superintendent:**

**Signature of Superintendent:**

**Date:**

**SCHOOL DIVISION INFORMATION**

**School Division**:

**Number of schools**:

**Student enrollment**:

**Student race/ethnicity distribution**

 **White**: **Pacific Islander/Asian**:

 **African American**: **Native American**:

 **Hispanic**: **Two or More Races**:

 **Unknown**:

**% of Students eligible for free or reduced lunch**:

**Number of students with IEP or 504 plans**:

**State accreditation status (2020)**:

**On-time graduation rate**:

**Number of fully-licensed teachers**:

*The* ***School Division Information*** *form should be attached as* ***Appendix A*** *to the school division’s application.***INNOVATION PARTNER IDENTIFICATION**

Include an Innovation Partner Identification form for any business, institution of higher education, community organization, agency, or other partnering group who has a key or embedded role in the implementation of the innovations proposed in this application.

**Innovation Partner:**

**Type of Organization:**

**Name of Primary Contact:**

**Title:**

**Email:**

**Potential Innovation Project Role/Responsibility:**

*Please include a letter of support, printed on letterhead, and signed by the individual(s) authorized to enter into contractual obligations on behalf of the above-named organization. Attach* ***Innovation Partner Identification*** *forms and* ***letters of support****, if any, as* ***Appendix B*** *of the application.*