

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Planning Grant Application for a College Partnership Laboratory School

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Name of Eligible Entity (Planning Grant Applicant):** George Mason University
2. **Authorized Official Representative:** Maggie Ewell, Director, Pre-Award
3. **Name of Contact Person for Application:** Ingrid Guerra-Lopez
4. **Telephone:** 703-993-2004
5. **Email:** iguerral@gmu.edu
6. **Office Telephone Number:** 703-993-2004
7. **Date of Submission:** October 21, 2022
8. **Amount of Funding Requested (\$200,000 maximum):** \$199,789
9. Public institutions of higher education (IHE); public higher education centers, institutes, or authorities; or eligible institutions of higher education as defined in the Tuition Assistance Grant Program, as provided in [§ 23.1-628](#), (eligible entity or entities) may apply for a Virginia Board of Education (Board) College Partnership Laboratory School Planning Grant (Planning Grant).
10. Each Planning Grant Applicant (applicant) seeking a Planning Grant must read and comply with the Instructions for Application for a Planning Grant for a College Partnership Laboratory School (Lab School), which are available on the Virginia Department of Education's (Department) website, and fully complete this Planning Grant Application (application) to be eligible for a Planning Grant.

11. Applications may be submitted, and will be evaluated for Planning Grant awards based on factors set forth herein, on a rolling basis.
- 12. Planning Grant Term: This application is for a one-time Planning Grant, the term for which will not exceed 12 months from the date of any award hereunder.**
13. The completed PDF version of the application and related materials must be sent to labschools@doe.virginia.gov by email. The Department may return or reject proposals that are incomplete.
14. Please contact labschools@doe.virginia.gov by email if there are any questions about the application process.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. **College Partnership Laboratory School:** In accordance with [Item 4-14](#) of the General Assembly’s 2022-2024 Biennium budget, the Code of Virginia § [22.1-349.1](#) is amended and reenacted, and the types of IHE eligible entities to establish Lab Schools are defined as follows:
 - a. "College Partnership Laboratory School" means 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](#). Notwithstanding the provisions of § [22.1-349.5](#), a public institution of higher education; a public higher education center, institute, or authority; or an eligible institution, as defined in § [23.1-628](#) may submit an application for formation of a college partnership laboratory school.”
 - b. An “eligible institution” as provided above is an institution of higher education as defined in the Tuition Assistance Grant Program in accordance with § [23.1-628](#).

2. **At-risk student:** As provided in the Code of Virginia § 22.1-349.1, "at-risk student" means a student having a physical, emotional, intellectual, socioeconomic, or cultural risk factor, as defined in Board criteria, that research indicates may negatively influence educational success.

For the purpose of these guidelines and any Planning Grant awards, "at-risk students" include (a) students who have experienced learning loss as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic; (b) students served by low-performing schools that are designated as "accredited with conditions" or "accreditation denied" based on the Virginia Board of Education's accreditation ratings; and (c) students attending schools identified under the Every Student Succeeds Act within three support categories: (i) Comprehensive Support and Improvement, (ii) Targeted Support and Improvement, or (iii) Additional Targeted Support Category.

3. **Regional diversity:** For the purpose of evaluation of this application, regional diversity reflects representation from each of the Department's eight Superintendent [regions](#).

C. ASSURANCES AND SIGNATURES

1. ASSURANCES

- a. By signing and submitting this application, the applicant assures that it will adhere to state and federal laws and regulations governing public schools, including the *Virginia Standards of Quality*, the *Virginia Standards of Learning*, and the Board's *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*.
- b. The applicant assures that all elements of the proposed school(s) will comport with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.
- c. The applicant certifies that to the best of his/her knowledge the information in the application is correct, that all application elements have been addressed as required in this application, and that the applicant understands and will comply with the assurances.
- d. The applicant agrees to conduct a review of their planning phase, and submit milestones and deliverables as required, including, but not limited to, a comprehensive report with details for the projected Lab School implementation, expenses, and other items as may be prescribed by the Department.

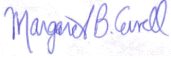
- e. Applicants receiving a Planning Grant are expected, by the end of the term of such grant, to submit a subsequent application for the launch of a Lab School to the Department, for review and approval by the Board.
- f. Applicant provides assurance to subscribe to the following reporting requirements timetable:

TIMELINE	BENCHMARK AND DELIVERABLES
On or before the end of the first quarter of the grant term	Awardee must present a proposed list of milestones, measures of success, and deliverables.
On or before the end of the second quarter of the grant term	Awardee must submit a progress report in order to be eligible for the second installment of the award.
On or before the end of the third quarter of the grant term	Awardee must present progress on milestones and deliverables, including submission to the Board of an application for approval to launch a Lab School.
On or before the end of the grant term	Awardee is expected to have attained approval by the Board to launch a Lab School.

2. SIGNATURES

- a. Higher Education Authorization:

Signature of [AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE of public institution of higher education; public higher education center, institute, or authority; or an eligible institution]:

DocuSigned by:

 9D1F585A4DEA498...

Printed Name: Maggie Ewell
 Title: Director, Pre-Award
 Date: 10/20/22

b. Virginia Community College Partner:

Signature of Authorized Representative:

Handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "PP EWC".

Printed Name: Eun-Woo Chang, Ph.D.
Title: Vice President and Chief Academic Officer,
Northern Virginia Community College
Date: 10/21/22

c. Fiscal Agent Authorization (if applicable):

Signature of Division Superintendent of Fiscal Agent School Division:

Handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M C Reid".

Printed Name: Dr. Michelle C. Reid
Title: Division Superintendent, Fairfax County Public Schools
Date:

d. Signature of Chairman of School Board of Fiscal Agent:

Handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachna Sizemore Heizer".

Printed Name: Rachna Sizemore Heizer
Title: Chair of School Board, Fairfax County Public Schools
Date: 10/21/2022

D. REGIONAL AND APPLICANT DIVERSITY

1. Planning Grants will be awarded in a manner that encourages ready access to Lab School options and the establishment of Lab Schools in each of the Department's [eight Superintendent regions](#).
2. Indicate Proposed Name(s) of Lab School: Accelerated College Pathways Academy
3. Identify Proposed Physical Location(s) of Lab School: Mason or NOVA campus or FCPS site to be determine

E. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, GOAL, AND TIMELINE

1. **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

- a. General description of the program (*2-3 paragraphs maximum*):

The tentatively named *Accelerated College Pathways Academy*, a lab school partnership among George Mason University (Mason), Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) 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:

- Expansion of the successful NOVA/MASON ADVANCE Pathways, with an initial primary emphasis on Information Technologies, into grades 9-12
- Transformation of approaches to teaching and learning in technology and STEM associated coursework through inclusion of highly effective problem-based learning activities co-developed with industry partners to include high quality work-based learning experiences
- Expansion of Mason's tech talent degree programs' pipeline through pedagogical partnerships among faculty in the Mason College of Education and Human Development (CEHD), faculty in STEM and Information Sciences and Technology at Mason, NOVA, FCPS, and business and industry partners.
- Early college high schools are partnerships between high schools and institutes of higher education in which students can work towards both a high school degree and an associates' degree simultaneously beginning as early as ninth grade. The proposed Accelerated College Pathways

Academy is a unique partnership between the largest school division in Virginia (FCPS), the largest community college in Virginia (NOVA), the largest public university in Virginia (MASON) and business and industry partners.

Accelerated College Pathways Academy will engage high school students with high quality work-based learning experiences, including industry-based internships and service learning in local middle and elementary schools to promote application of content area and transferable skills; incorporate innovative problem-based instructional approaches; open access to ADVANCE, a model articulation program between NOVA and Mason; and near peer coaching for ADVANCE students who are at more advanced stages of the college pathway. Intended outcomes of Accelerated College Pathways Academy include reducing the financial burden of preparation for careers in the technology industry on students and their families, diversifying the talent pool and pathways into undergraduate and advanced graduate work, creating a pathway to fill critical demand in key industries, and anchoring the pedagogy of technology and STEM instruction in strong problem-solving skills that students can apply across contexts. Once this approach is piloted and further finetuned, we envision expanding the Accelerated College Pathways Academy to other high demand fields such as education and health care with the goal of establishing a regional consortium with Region IV school division partners.

b. Rationale for the program (*2-3 paragraphs maximum*):

The Accelerated College Pathways Academy will serve to extend an already successful multi-institutional pathway program called ADVANCE. A comprehensive initiative between NOVA and Mason, this program provides multiple benefits for students including articulated four-year academic pathways for more than 70 majors, assigned coaches through Bachelor's degree completion, and access to four-year resources that enhance student engagement. The program's wrap around services support students through a seamless transition from NOVA to Mason removing unnecessary administrative burdens that can become an additional barrier to transfer in traditional models. This program has been highly successful in its five years of existence. Of its current student population of 3,300, 39% are Pell-eligible and 74% are non-white. Furthermore, the average retention rate of matriculants to Mason from Fall 2019 – Fall 2021 is 95% and 92% of ADVANCE students graduate with their Bachelor's degree from Mason less than two years after matriculation.

Using this nationally recognized model as a foundation, an expanded collaboration with high schools will be piloted with Fairfax County Public Schools.

The aim is to extend ADVANCE curricular pathways so that they begin in high school through dual enrollment, allowing students to complete their bachelor's degree on an accelerated timeline. Initially focusing on pathways in Information Technology (IT), Accelerated College Pathways Academy will serve as a hub for exposing students to a variety of hands-on, experiential learning opportunities through the engagement of industry partners, problem-based learning, and opportunities to apply content and transferable skills in a variety of context such as through service learning in elementary and middle schools. Long range plans include expansion of the model to additional district partners in Superintendent's Region 4 and across multiple disciplines such as health sciences and education that will address careers experiencing critical shortages.

- c. Nature of innovation proposed for the program, including how it will improve student academic proficiency, mastery, college and career readiness, and long-term outcome goal (2-3 paragraphs maximum):

Research suggests the early college model is a demonstrated best practice for improving high school student outcomes and college success of participating students (American Institutes for Research, 2017). Targeted attention from educators who are credentialed for both high school and college instruction will ensure that students meet both high school and college general education requirements simultaneously. Further instruction in college major coursework will include problem-based learning, hands-on experiences, and engagement with existing partners in the IT industry. Students will be able to explore various paths to a variety of IT careers at various stages of their educational journey that will lead to family-sustaining wages in a region where IT jobs are in high demand.

Students will also receive focused support and access to academic coaches, tutors, academic advising, and peer mentoring in order to ensure they remain on target and efficiently and successfully complete the program. The involvement of industry partners and resources from NOVA's Career Services Center and Mason's University Career Services Center will ensure readiness for the workplace as students make progress through their educational journey. An additional benefit of the Accelerated College Pathways Academy will be the development of a Learning Innovations Lab. The Learning Innovations Lab will become a training ground of innovative teaching practices for future educators as college students in teacher preparation programs will be able to conduct observations and field experiences at this location.

- d. Expected student learning benefits (2-3 paragraphs maximum):

The Accelerated College Pathways Academy will be designed to initially support students from underrepresented populations in grades 11 and 12 in Fairfax County Schools with plans for extension to students in grades 9 and 10 in 2024-25. With an initial focus on Information Technology, students will have the benefit of pursuing stackable pathways into a range of IT professions. Whether students pursue certifications and enter the workforce directly, pursue an associate's degree or complete a four-year program, there are options to 'stack' knowledge and expertise across clear pathways with tangible career and earning payoffs. This model affords students the opportunity to start their college coursework earlier resulting in significant monetary savings and earlier increases in earning potential across their educational journey.

In addition to the financial benefits, early college high school models are supported by research and evidence that have demonstrated improved outcomes for traditionally underserved and underrepresented students in terms of both high school and post-secondary education including 1) increased likelihood of high school graduation 2) improved attendance and engagement, 3) improved student-teacher relationship and 4) increased likelihood of earning a college degree (AIR, 2017). The curriculum of Accelerated College Pathways Academy will engage students in problem-based and experiential learning opportunities through partnerships with business/industry partners. Access to industry partners will support internships, apprenticeships, and job opportunities. Through a 'learn and earn' model the Accelerated College Pathways Academy will address key barriers to higher education for traditionally underserved populations.

- e. Expected teacher learning and professional development benefits (*2-3 paragraphs maximum*):

Establishment of the Accelerated College Pathways Academy creates opportunities for positively impacting the learning experience of underrepresented high school students by first transforming the instruction they experience. Because the proposed lab school does not just expand the pipeline, but rather changes the approach to teaching in early college IT classes, instructors will engage in robust professional development related to best-practices in STEM instruction, experiential learning and problem-based learning that have the potential to strengthen a variety of 21st Century transferable skills such as a critical thinking, problem-based learning, and life-long learning.

To transform pedagogies for STEM and IT instruction, the Mason College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) will partner with high school and university instructors in the IT fields as well as industry partners to develop strong pedagogical expertise in STEM and IT pedagogies. This includes using co-planning and the six models of co-teaching to support the pedagogical

development of IT faculty in problem-based and experiential learning. Through interdisciplinary partnerships, CEHD faculty and teacher candidates will work side by side with IT faculty and early college faculty across general curriculum disciplines to plan and lead instruction. This provides innovative professional development opportunities across educational stakeholders.

Potential collaborative opportunities across stakeholders also exist in terms of the support services provided to students in the Accelerated College Pathways Academy. For example, CEHD faculty expertise in mentoring, counseling, career development, motivation, and self-regulation has the potential to inform the professional learning across faculty in this lab school model. As a part of the Learning Innovations Lab, teacher candidates and Mason students can support the development and sustainability of the lab school through internship opportunities

- f. Content areas addressed: Information Technology with plans for expansion to Health Care Professions and Education

2. **GOAL**

State the overall proposed goal for the program:

The overarching goal of the proposed Accelerated College Pathways Academy is to increase access and workforce readiness to IT fields for underrepresented students through myriad pathways (workforce, two-year, four-year, advanced degrees). Subgoals include:

- 1) Expand the ADVANCE pathway as a way to amplify its positive impact on college attendance and completion
- 2) Integrate innovative pedagogical practices and experiential learning opportunities with business partners to strengthen workforce readiness and lifelong learning dispositions
- 3) Increase access to work-based learning experiences for underrepresented and underserved students to include internships during high school and *earn and learn* models
- 4) Increase the annual percentage of underrepresented and underserved students who enroll in postsecondary education immediately following high school within the participating high schools.
- 5) Increase the dual enrollment credits and/or industry certifications (in IT and STEM related fields) earned by graduating seniors within the participating high schools.
- 6) Decrease the time to a 2 or 4-year or advanced degree for underrepresented and underserved students while also reducing cost and time to the degree.

3. **TIMELINE**

Provide a timeline of the planning process, including the proposed date/school year for launch of a Lab School:

The section below describes the timeline and potential activities for the planning grant funding. The phases represent the quarterly reporting guidelines required of the planning grant RFP.

The planning grant application will be submitted by October 20, 2022. If approved, the main application will be submitted by the end of January 2023 with planning funds used through summer 2023. The approved Lab School will begin hiring teachers and recruiting students during Spring 2023 with the intended opening in Fall 2023. The timeline will be adjusted as needed in response to receipt of funding for the planning proposal.

Phase 1: Solidifying Partnerships and Priorities for Planning September/October 2022	
Objectives	Activities
Establish planning team and meeting structures to support application development	<p>Assemble small group of stakeholders from Mason, NOVA, FCPS, in consultation with industry partners to develop and submit planning grant proposal.</p> <p>Identify a project coordinator and recruit additional stakeholders to establish Lab School Application Team.</p> <p>Recruit a graduate research assistant for project support.</p> <p>Participate in regular, weekly planning meetings.</p>
Define the preliminary overarching framework for the Accelerated College Pathways Academy	<p>Plan initial summit with planning team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set goals and processes for application preparation. • Finetune the overarching project timeline. <p>Participate in regular, weekly planning meetings.</p>

<p>Phase 2 Identify key elements and success factors for highly effective accelerated college pathway programs November 2022</p>
--

Objectives	Activities
<p>Validate stakeholder needs and priorities to formalize the structure (e.g. students, families, school partners, employers, etc...)</p>	<p>Host focus group sessions with stakeholder groups (students, families, school partners, employers, and other relevant agencies such as Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, and others.)</p> <p>Survey stakeholder groups (students, families, school partners, employers, etc.).</p>
<p>Integrate research literature on highlight effective problem-based instruction and accelerated college preparation</p>	<p>Hire graduate students to support a review and synthesis of the evidence on accelerated college preparation programs (including highly effective governance structures); and effective problem-based teaching and learning. Will also support other research-related activities and identify potential experts and exemplars</p> <p>Define clear key success factors and design specifications for the program.</p> <p>Participate in regular, weekly planning meetings.</p>
<p>Engage experts and exemplars to share effective practices and lessons learned in accelerated college preparation models, as well as in problem-based instruction.</p>	<p>Recruit business partners, experts in policy from each partner, experts in pedagogy from each partner, families, and students.</p> <p>Develop a protocol for discussing accelerated college programs and validated practices to ensure that we gather consistent information across sites.</p> <p>Invite experts to present and/or discuss at weekly planning meetings.</p> <p>Participate in regular, weekly planning meetings.</p>

<p>Assess sites for proposed lab school location (including FCPS high schools) and finalize school name</p>	<p>Organize site visits to exemplars.</p> <p>Participate in regular, weekly planning meetings</p> <p>Hold Summit #2 with full planning team to continue application development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize name, location and overarching curricular goals
---	---

<p align="center">Phase 3 Develop and Refine Lab School Application November 2022-January 2023</p>	
<p align="center">Objectives</p>	<p align="center">Activities</p>
<p>Assess sites for proposed lab school</p>	<p>Conduct site visits to exemplars.</p> <p>Participate in regular, weekly planning meetings.</p>
<p>Use Phase 2 findings and recommendations to fully develop and refine the Accelerated College Pathways Academy proposal</p>	<p>Participate in regular, weekly planning meetings.</p> <p>Hold Summit #3 with full planning team to continue application development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning innovations. Use feedback from stakeholders to integrate curriculum with evidenced-based practices in workplace learning.
<p>Submit Lab School Application</p>	<p>Participate in regular, weekly planning meetings.</p>

<p align="center">Phase 4 Prepare for Fall 2023 opening of Accelerated College Pathways Academy February-August 2023</p>	
<p align="center">Objectives</p>	<p align="center">Activities</p>
<p>Recruit and orient teachers, students, families and industry partners for Fall 2023 opening of Technology Innovations Early College Academy</p>	<p><u>February-April</u></p> <p>Participate in regular, weekly planning meetings.</p>

	<p>Recruit teachers, students, families and industry.</p> <p>Hold educational information sessions for counselors, families and students.</p> <p><u>May-August</u> Participate in regular, weekly planning meetings.</p> <p>Host summer bridge session to orient students and families</p>
<p>Develop implementation and roll out plan for the Technology Innovations Early College Academy</p>	<p><u>February-June</u> Participate in regular, weekly planning meetings.</p> <p>Hold Summit #4 with full planning team to develop rollout plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize and clarify desired implementation outcomes and requirements across multiple time periods. • Define roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders • Develop a sub-team to define required support (time, training, tools, wrap around services and other resources to carry out the work). <p>Design professional development to support teachers.</p> <p>Identify roles and responsibilities for stakeholders.</p> <p><u>June-August</u> Participate in regular, weekly planning meetings.</p> <p>Prepare to open school (classroom space and materials).</p>

	<p>Finalize syllabi, school handbooks, school procedures, resources/wrap around services for students and families.</p> <p>Professional development activities for teachers.</p> <p>Design/confirm workplace learning opportunities.</p>
--	--

F. STUDENT POPULATION AND RELEVANT RESEARCH

1. TARGETED STUDENT POPULATION

- a. Describe the student population and discuss why they are proposed. Include the number of students, reporting group(s), and grade level(s):

The Accelerated College Pathways Academy will serve high school students in grades 9-12 that have not been traditionally represented in the Information Science and STEM fields. The sections that follow outline the rationale for identifying the target student population.

GRADES TO BE SERVED FOR THE FULL TERM OF THE APPROVED LAB SCHOOL CONTRACT (PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY*)			
Pre-K		Sixth Grade	
Kindergarten		Seventh Grade	
First Grade		Eighth Grade	
Second Grade		Ninth Grade	30
Third Grade		Tenth Grade	30
Fourth Grade		Eleventh Grade	30
Fifth Grade		Twelfth Grade	30

*If the applicant intends to add or change grade levels at some point during the Lab School’s operation, please provide this information in the education program section of the narrative.

b. Describe the community(ies) the school(s) serves:

Students enrolled in Accelerated College Pathways Academy will be from high schools that have historically had a lower percentage of students enrolling in and persisting through completion of a postsecondary education. The planning grant will be used to determine the specific school communities that will initially participate as well as confirming a physical location for the early college. Potential sites include locations on either of the two postsecondary partners' campuses or at an existing FCPS school site. It is proposed for the early college to begin with a cohort of 30 students in 11th grade and 30 students in 12th grade with the potential to expand to additional students and/or grade levels as the program develops in 2024-25. Early recruitment and preparation will begin in 9th and 10th grade.

If the Lab 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, classical education, etc.), please describe the focus:

The focus of the Early College will be on stackable pathways (certificates, associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees and advanced degrees within Information Technology field.

c. If the Lab 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, classical education, etc.), please describe the focus:

The focus of the accelerated college academy will be on stackable pathways (certificates, associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees and graduate degrees within Information Technology field primarily for high school students from underrepresented/underserved populations.

2. RELEVANT RESEARCH

Discuss any relevant research tied to the proposed student population and overall goal of the program to demonstrate that it will improve student academic proficiency, mastery, college and career readiness, and long-term outcomes:

The purpose of Accelerated College Pathways Academy is to recruit a population of students that have not been traditionally represented in college, and in IT fields. To this end, we will use validated, highly effective approaches to teaching and learning that are grounded in contemporary educational research and innovations. Cycles of inquiry, action, and reflection will inform the daily activities of teachers and learners. In all learning environments, teaching and learning will support students' development in each of the domains of the Virginia Portrait of a

Graduate. Furthermore, teaching and learning will be based on inquiry, developed in local and global contexts, focused on effective teamwork and collaboration, designed to remove barriers to learning, connected to industry-based internship and work experiences, and informed by assessment. Grounded in the belief that learning how to learn is fundamental to a student's education, we will support students' development of the following interrelated skills: thinking, research, communication, social, and self-management.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) will provide a framework for learning at the Accelerated College Pathways Academy. This will allow students to gain knowledge and skills necessary for being workforce ready. By participating in internship experiences, students will actively engage in, investigate, and respond to real-world questions, problems or challenges alongside industry professionals. As teachers plan instruction to meet the diverse needs of students, they will incorporate validated, highly effective, evidenced-based practices to support students as they access to advanced content knowledge, higher level thinking, conceptual development, problem solving, and real-world applications. As a central pedagogical tool at Accelerated College Pathways Academy, PBL will provide opportunities for teachers to observe student performance that is unlikely to occur when implementing traditional teacher-directed instruction.

G. COLLABORATION AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

1. Describe the involvement of local school divisions, community-based organizations, employers, teachers, and parents in the planning, development, and implementation of the proposed program:

Stakeholders from Mason, NOVA, and FCPS representing myriad roles and perspectives have been included in the initial brainstorming and planning proposal preparation. These stakeholders include faculty and leadership in each of the respective partners. Once planning grant funding is received, additional stakeholders will be included on the planning team. This will include but is not limited to university and school-based faculty with expertise in problem-based learning and validated best practices in secondary education, administrators with deep understanding of early college structures and dual endorsement requirements, community-based organizations, information technology employers, teachers, parents, and students.

If the Lab School is going to be in partnership with a local school division(s), please describe the partnership briefly:

George Mason University (Mason), Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) have an extensive history of

collaboration and partnership. The Mason/NOVA partnership is best exemplified by the ADVANCE Pathways Initiative which provides a direct, seamless pathway from NOVA to Mason across more than 70 majors. In addition, Mason also has a long-standing partnership with FCPS best represented by extensive collaborative efforts in CEHD. Through intentional structures, Mason and FCPS engage in a mutually beneficial partnership supporting teacher preparation, teacher professional development, and PK-12 student learning. Additionally, NOVA and FCPS have a strong partnership that has significantly expanded dual enrollment opportunities within FCPS high school students at no cost to students and families.

While the funding proposed here will support a new initiative, collaborative efforts across the three partners already exist and provide evidence of a history of partnership. For example, Mason and NOVA collaborate on a tutoring program in which students are trained to provide tutoring services to underserved students in several FCPS elementary and middle schools. In addition, for over 20 years FCPS and Mason have celebrated a successful partnership through the Early Identification Program (EIP), providing academic, career, and developmental support for first-generation students to prepare for and succeed in college.

Partnering to establish a Lab School is a natural extension of existing collaborative efforts among Mason, NOVA, and FCPS and affords an opportunity to build upon existing and extend existing structures across all three partners. Potential for expansion to additional partners also exists. Once the success of Accelerated College Pathways Academy can be documented, schools that traditionally work with underrepresented students throughout the Commonwealth may be included in expansion efforts.

H. SUSTAINABILITY

1. The goal of the Planning Grant program is to support public institutions of higher education; public higher education centers, institutes, or authorities; or eligible institutions of higher education as defined in the Tuition Assistance Grant Program, as defined in [§ 23.1-628](#), as they develop and implement programs in order to create or improve capacity to operate and sustain a Lab School independently of long-term state funding, and in a manner that promotes quality, innovation, and program results.
2. Please describe the capacity of your public institution of higher education; public higher education center, institute, or authority; or eligible institution to implement a Lab School:

Mason, NOVA, and FCPS are well positioned to plan and implement the proposed lab school model by leveraging partnerships and initiatives already in place as a springboard for developing a diverse pipeline into IT fields, transforming STEM and IT pedagogy, and addressing the needs of underserved and underrepresented student communities. In 2019, Mason received \$235 million dollars as a part of the Tech Talent Investment Program (TTIP) which is

intended to support Mason's efforts to create a technology development hub on the Arlington campus and prepare graduates for technology fields. At present the funds are being used to build the Institute of Digital Innovation and support partnerships with technology and government industries. Similarly, 'Fuse at Mason' is a 360,000 square foot newly renovated space in Arlington that will serve as a technology innovation hub with high tech tenants, incubation facilities, and co-working spaces creating opportunities for collaboration among stakeholders and real-world practice-based experiences for students in the proposed. By leveraging state resources already in place to recruit and a funding stream to support development of a pipeline into technology-based professions, the creation of Accelerated College Pathways Academy extends this pipeline into the high school setting to support talent development in underrepresented populations and contributing to regional development goals.

3. Identify potential affiliates, partners, and describe potential sustainable funding sources:

Mason has numerous existing structures, relationships and affiliates that serve as potential future partners and sustainable funding sources for Technology Innovations Early College Academy. Accelerated College Pathways Academy could partner with existing industry partners who has internship placement experience (Genesis Works, Urban Alliance, SkillsUp, Amazon Web Service, Boeing, Booz Allen, Peraton, ManTECH, and many others). Partnering with industry leads provides an opportunity to engage and mentor high school students in capstone projects and internship experiences. We also have opportunities to partner with Fairfax County Economic Development Administration (FCEDA) and Northern Virginia Technology Council and host a career (or lab school) fair to recruit industry volunteers who want to work with and inspire high school students in classroom settings.

George Mason University also has a strong relationship with leading information technology industry partners. For example, the Cybersecurity Engineering degree was co-developed with Northrop Grumman (<https://volgenau.gmu.edu/news/2015-03/volgenau-schools-innovative-cyber-security-program-prepares-students-crucial-careers>). Similarly, Northern Virginia Community College and George Mason University developed a 2+2 BAS Cloud Computing degree with Amazon (<https://aws.amazon.com/blogs/publicsector/george-mason-university-and-northern-virginia-community-college-announce-the-regions-first-bachelors-degree-for-cloud-computing-with-aws-educate/>).

George Mason University also received a break through tech (BTT) grant through which first and second year female students work on projects such as developing an AI app to solve a societal issue under GMU faculty and industry partners' guidance. This model is scalable because each industry partner can support up to 10 students. This year, Microsoft, Booz Allen Hamilton, and Mastercard

participated in the program (<https://www.mastercard.com/news/perspectives/2022/propelling-women-in-tech-careers/>) Under the proposed lab school, we will use the model already nationally approved for high school students so they get to work on real world problems in a classroom setting while industry volunteers support them and help them take their projects to the next level.

4. Identify potential barriers to the planning process and possible ways to address them:

Engaging in a robust planning process will allow us to identify potential barriers with our team of stakeholders and determine ways to address each prior to implementation. Several potential barriers and possible solutions include

- 1) Student willingness to attend a school other than their base school
 - a. Possible solution: exploring ways for students in the early college to still have access to extracurricular, after school and community ideas
- 2) Credentialing of faculty for teaching in an early college setting
 - a. Possible solution: exploration of collaboration among CEHD, NOVA and FCPS to identify potential instructors and provide required certification support
- 3) Making the pieces of the puzzle work across three distinct educational settings (governance and manage structure, transportation, calendar, curriculum & funding guidelines, working with students under 18; dual credential teaching requirements)
 - a. Possible solution: collaborate with IHEs and districts in states with successful accelerated college pathways programs that include multiple partners to identify strategies and approaches for navigating these sustainability, structural, and logistical challenges.

I. BUDGET OF DIRECT COSTS (WITH \$200,000 MAXIMUM)

1. Complete the budget table below outlining the financial plan of how the Planning Grant will be used in the effort to establish a Lab School. The Planning Grant period and use of funds may not exceed 12 months from the date of award.
2. Only include direct operating costs. Indirect costs and capital outlay costs are not allowed. Include a description of expenses that explains appropriateness of expenses based on the category descriptions shown below.
3. All expenses must be directly related to the proposed Planning Grant activities. Applicants are not guaranteed the requested award amount and any award may be proportionally adjusted according to application's weighted Planning Grant Application Evaluation Rubric score and to reflect only those expenditures that are designated as permissible.
4. **Note: Any unspent Planning Grant funds remaining at the end of the grant term must be returned by the recipient to the Department.**

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF EXPENSES	FUNDING REQUESTED
1000 – Personal Services	Project Coordinator, Project Assistant for FCPS & NOVA, Two Graduate Research Assistants (GRA)	\$95,002
2000 – Employee Benefits	Fringe benefits for faculty and FICA for wage employee	\$18,807
3000 – Purchased/Contractual Services	Honoraria for External Experts, Summit Meeting Support, Stipends to Support Teacher Professional Development, Curriculum Development, and External Evaluator	\$43,000
4000 – Internal Services	GRA Tuition, Fees & Health Insurance	\$12,551
5000 – Other Services	Travel support for planning team to conduct site visits	\$24,000
6000 – Materials and Supplies	Supplies	\$6,429
Total		\$199,789

*** Total cannot exceed \$200,000 with additional funding considered at the discretion of the Department on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with available funds.**

Please visit the [Virginia Department of Education OMEGA object codes universal guidelines](#) for a complete description of the budget categories.

The budget of this proposal requests funds for the Accelerated College Pathways Academy Planning Team to develop their understanding of early college models and best practices with a specific focus on preparing for the development of Virginia’s first early college. This includes laying the

foundation for submission for a Lab School Application by mid-January. The budget below centers on financial support for

- One **project coordinator** who will (1) lead the overall planning grant efforts (2) coordinating the scheduling of the Accelerated College Pathways Academy Planning Team, (3) coordinate the efforts of the planning team including development of agendas for meetings and summits, lead writing of application, communicate with team members, etc.
- One **project assistant** who will support the work of the project coordinator and assist project leads in FCPS, NOVA, and Mason
- **One Graduate Research Assistant** to support grant activities including (1) designing and gathering research and best practices related to early colleges; (2) conducting searches of existing early colleges; (3) engaging in a literature review/synthesis on early colleges; (4) supporting development, distribution and analysis of surveys; (5) supporting focus group data collection and analysis with stakeholders
- Honoraria for **time/expertise of experts** and leaders at early colleges and in problem-based learning to support development of Technology Innovations Early College Academy.
- **Travel support** for members of the Accelerated College Pathways Academy Planning Team to visit exemplary early college models.
- **Supplies** to support program and curriculum development
- Funds to support **four summits** for members of the Accelerated College Pathways Academy Planning Team. These funds will be used to pay for location fees, meeting materials, and meals for attendees.
- Funds to support **teacher participation** in professional development and curriculum design activities associated with planning for the opening of Technology Innovations Early College Academy.

The following section is the line-item budget summary

- **Principal Investigator**
 - Dean Ingrid Guerra-Lopez will lead the design and development of the Accelerated College Pathways Academy framework as described in the goals/aims of this proposal.
- **Co-Investigator**
 - Dr. Audra Parker will be responsible for supporting the design and performance of the project as described in the goals/aims of this proposal.

- **Co-Investigator**
 - Dr. Roberto Pamas will be responsible for supporting the design and performance of the project as described in the goals/aims of this proposal.
- **Co-Investigator**
 - Dr. Kamaljeet Sanghera will be responsible for supporting the design and performance of the project as described in the goals/aims of this proposal.
- **Project Coordinator (\$55,002)**
 - To Be Named. One project coordinator is requested for \$55,002 to support the investigators in managing the administrative and logistical tasks of the proposed project as described in the goals/aims of this proposal from October 2022-August 2023, including coordinating and leading meetings with the research team, supervising the GRA, preparing manuscripts for publication, preparing annual progress reports, etc.
- **Project Assistant for FCPS & NOVA (\$12,000)**
 - To Be Named. One project assistant is requested for \$12,000 to support the work of the project coordinator and assist project leads in FCPS, NOVA, and Mason.
- **One Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) (\$28,000)**
 - One part-time GRA is requested for \$7,787 from November-December, one full-time GRA is requested for \$20,213 from January-August.
- **Fringe Benefits (\$18,807)**
 - George Mason University's negotiated fringe benefit rates for Fiscal Year 2023 are applied as follows:
Faculty, Academic & Calendar 32.6%
FICA Only (summer, adjunct, non-student wages) 7.3%
The rates quoted above shall, at the time of funding be subject to adjustment, if superseding Government approval rates have been established. Salaries, wages and fringe benefits are estimates only and will be paid and billed in accordance with University policy.
- **Honoraria for External Experts (\$4,000)**
 - Honoraria to compensate for **time/expertise of experts** and leaders at early colleges and in problem-based learning to support development of Technology Innovations Early College Academy.
- **Travel Support for Accelerated College Pathways Academy Planning Team (\$24,000)**
 - \$24,000 in travel funds to support site visits

- **Tuition, Fees & Health Insurance (\$12,551)**
 - \$8,392 of tuition support is requested for part-time GRA in fall semester and full-time GRA in spring semester. \$2,254 of mandatory student fees is also requested. GRA health insurance of \$1,905 is requested for the full-time GRA.
- **Supplies (\$6,429)**
 - Technology for project leads and assistants, hardware and/or software, curricula materials, etc.
- **Summit Meeting Support (\$4,000)**
 - \$4,000 to support location fees, materials, and meals for 4 summits/retreats
- **Stipends to Support Teacher Professional Development, Curriculum Development, and External Evaluator (\$35,000)**
 - \$35,000 to be distributed to support teacher participation in professional development and curriculum design activities associated with planning for the opening of Technology Innovations Early College Academy. It will also cover an external evaluator to support the development of a program measurement framework to support program effectiveness.

APPENDIX: PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION EVALUATION RUBRIC

For the applicant’s information, the following will be used as the Planning Grant Application Evaluation Rubric for this application. Applicant does not need to complete this section.

AREA OF CONSIDERATION	DESCRIPTION	POINTS AVAILABLE
Targeted Student Population(s) and Relevant Research	Application proposes intention to serve at-risk students and/or offer a new, innovative model of instruction grounded in evidence-based practices to improve student academic proficiency, mastery, college and career readiness, and long-term outcomes.	30
Clarity of Program Description Goal, and Timeline	The program description and goal are clear and attainable. Indication of programmatic, operational, and infrastructural capacity to advance an application to launch a Lab School program, as well as launch a Lab School no later than the 2024-2025 school year. Additional preference will be given to applicants with an earlier Lab School launch timeline.	20
Sustainability	Evidence of institutional commitment to the viability of a Lab School in a manner that promotes quality, innovation, program results, and sustainability.	20
Collaboration	Evidence of engagement and collaboration with stakeholders, including local school divisions, community-based organizations, employers, teachers and parents.	15
Regional and Applicant Diversity	Evidence of diversity of location, with the goal of Lab Schools in each Superintendent region. For applicant diversity, preference will be given to new applicants in the event a concurrent applicant has previously received a Planning Grant during the current application period.	15