VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Planning Grant Application
for a College Partnership Laboratory School

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Name of Eligible Entity (Planning Grant Applicant):** Virginia Union University

2. **Authorized Official Representative:** Dr. Linda Jackson
3. **Name of Contact Person for Application:** Dr. Linda Jackson/Ms. Felicia D. Cosby

4. **Telephone:** 804.257.5807

5. **Email:** lrjackson@vuu.edu; fdcosby@vuu.edu

6. **Office Telephone Number:** Click or tap here to enter text.

7. **Date of Submission:** January 23, 2023

8. **Amount of Funding Requested ($200,000 maximum): $200,000**

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.

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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.

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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]:

Printed Name: Dr. Linda R. Jackson
Title: Vice President, Sponsored Research and Innovation
Date: January 23, 2023

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b. <u>Fiscal Agent Authorization (if applicable):</u>

Signature of Division Superintendent of Fiscal Agent School Division:

Printed Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Title: Click or tap here to enter text.
Date: Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Printed Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Title: Click or tap here to enter text.
Date: Click or tap here to enter text.

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: Virginia Union University Promise Academy

3. Identify Proposed Physical Location(s) of Lab School: Richmond, VA

E. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, GOAL, AND TIMELINE

1. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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

In 1964, Children's Defense Fund founder, Marian Wright Edelman, developed innovative and academically enriched afterschool and summer camps called Freedom Schools. These Freedom Schools quickly became renowned for their success in helping at-risk students, whose lives had been greatly impacted by poverty and other social determinants, realize high academic achievement. Edelman believed every child could succeed and would do so if given the proper support and foundation (*Edelman, 2018*). Inspired by these schools, Virginia Union University (VUU) aims to provide transformative instructional programming and experiences for all students—no matter their zip code or environmental circumstances--in the City of Richmond. The VUU Promise Academy Lab School (The Academy) is envisioned as a collaborative effort with Richmond Public Schools, local non-profits, industry and Virginia Union University that is designed to inspire innovation, creativity, and social entrepreneurism in students in grades 6th through 12th via rigorous, relevant, project-based instruction with a focus on the sciences, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM).

The VUU Promise Academy Lab School will help strengthen the region's secondary educational options to ensure more local graduates are not only college and career ready, but can compete globally for high-demand technical, high-performing jobs requiring critical thinkers, problem solvers, and innovators. The Academy will provide students access to opportunity for high productivity in order to live and thrive. The Academy will serve as another option for Richmond Public Schools parents who may want a non-traditional choice with smaller classrooms and more personalized learning. Moreover, it will offer a viable alternative for at-risk students interested in pursuing a career in a STEAM field, but may not thrive in a traditional setting. The primary goals of the Academy are to:

- Provide an environment that will help stem the district's dropout epidemic and low academic performance at the secondary levels;
- Create a diverse pipeline of career and college-focused students equipped to meet the workforce needs in the STEM fields;
- Provide underserved families and "at risk" students with another rigorous "choice" at the secondary level;
- Promote instructional rigor to address the demands of the global economy;
- Support a holistic approach to meet the needs of the "whole" child

Initial programmatic offerings will be for 6th through 8th grades, with a graduated five-year plan to add a secondary grade level (9th through 12th) each subsequent year after launch. The Academy will be an application and referral-based option for Richmond residents only. The

targeted students will be those considered "at risk" and enrolled as graduating fifth grade students in an RPS elementary school and/or who attend an RPS middle school.

a. **Rationale for the program** *(2-3 paragraphs maximum)***:** As school districts in Virginia reopen amid lingering COVID-19 concerns, teachers, parents, and students, alike, are dealing with the disruption, trauma, and challenges of remote learning. For minority students, these issues are compounded by decades-old instructional inequities experienced throughout the Commonwealth. Statewide, of the 132 districts surveyed by the Virginia Department of Education in 2021, close to two dozen reported a more than 30% increase in middle and high school students failing two or more classes this year compared to 2020. And close to half of the school districts (40) ranked failing students as the biggest issue with remote learning. Recent results show significant drops in Virginia's national assessments. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics' report on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), a look at the fourth and eighth grade achievements, Virginia showed declines in both reading and math between 2019 and 2022 for both grade-levels. (https://www.virginiamercury.com/2022/10/24/national-assessment-shows-significant-drops-in-virginia-reading-and-math-scores/)

In disaggregating the Virginia Standards of Learning (VSOL) assessment data by the race/ethnicity of students, indicators reflected that elementary Black, Indigenous (Hispanic and Native American), and People of Color (BIPOC) students generally showed less year-to-year (2019-2020) learning growth than white students. The 2022 VSOL assessment data found that BIPOC students had scores that indicated they were starting school three to four months behind in math achievement, which strongly suggests that some students did not learn any new material during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Richmond, current educational outcomes are especially alarming. For example, middle school pass rates in mathematics reflect some of the lowest scores in the Commonwealth. In grade 6, only 27 percent of students passed SOL mathematics; in grade 7, only 10 percent passed; and in grade 8, only 18 percent passed. When reviewing SOL test data on a school-by-school basis at the middle school level, student academic performance is even more concerning. At Martin Luther King, Jr.—a high-needs, hard-to-staff middle school located in one of the City's public housing developments—the 7th grade math pass rate is at 4 percent, and the 8th grade pass rate is at 5 percent. Grade 8 science scores are no better at a 5 percent pass rate. Poor academic performance illustrated in recent SOL data also was evident in other key performance indicators—specifically the district's on-time graduation rate. Last year, RPS graduated only 74.3 percent of its senior class on time--compared to the state's average of 92.1 percent.

B. **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):* While STEAM is not unique in PK-12

education, a critical element of VUU's Promise Academy's pedagogical focus is an integrated approach to STEAM and ensuring that classroom activities and projects are all impacted by two or more STEAM domains for a comprehensive and immersive experience to enhance student learning, as well as understanding of practical application to real-world dilemmas. Intentional priority will be given to:

- Creating environments that inspire curiosity, encourage creativity and thought
- Integrating mathematics and sciences into projects/lesson plans/instruction
- Focusing on connecting theory to practical applications in the community and workplace

At the secondary level, students in the 10th through 12th grades will be required to get a credential in one of four industry areas. In addition, 11th and 12th graders with a 2.5 GPA or higher will automatically be enrolled in VUU's Dual Enrollment program through Virginia Union Technical College (VUTCH) so that they graduate with an Associate degree.

Highlighted below are additional innovative elements that will be found in specific programmatic aspects of the Promise Academy. They are designed to increase retention, engagement, college and career pipelines, content and soft skills acquisition, citizenship and intellectual curiosity:

- Year Round/Extended Day Calendar
- Blended and Experiential Learning-- students will utilize online tools, and in-person pedagogy based on inquiry-led instruction and project-based curriculum. The Academy will develop a digital emphasis for students and expansion of broadband opportunities for parental support.
- Promise Coaches—every child will be assigned to a Promise Coach who will serve as a career/life advisor, as well as a family/school liaison to help ensure wrap-around support for students. The Academy will include a "Community of Supporters" that will assist & empower students on their educational journey.
- Personalized Learning Plans (PLP)-- Each student will be required to complete a PLP designed to help foster an understanding of the relevance between their K-12 education and their long-term career goals. The PLP will identify students' strengths & challenges. Targeted actions will be identified, interventions planned, and progress monitored & noted.
- Imagination and Innovation Labs-- will be utilized throughout all program levels. In partnership with VUU's Center for Innovation and Technology, the Math Science and Innovation Center, as well as the Metropolitan Business League and other non/for-profit organizations, the lab will be a hub of project-based innovation, content area integration, and creativity for students to birth innovations and design solutions to address dilemmas in science, technology, social entrepreneurism, and education equity.
- Social Entrepreneurism-- the pay-it-forward philosophical approach will empower students to consider and provide solutions for community-based issues and build leadership skills.

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- Workforce Development and Training – VUU's The Academy students will benefit from VUU's Workforce Development & Training model that focuses on the five Cs of soft skills, professional/leadership development, and career readiness; all of which will undergird the STEAM curriculum. All students—ranging from the 6th grade through the 12th grades—will have exposure to workforce development concepts, including interpersonal communications, career visioning, and intellectual curiosity,
- Mentorship –using VUU's community-based Mentorship model, all VUU Promise students will be assigned to both VUU undergraduate or faculty/professional mentors
- Tutors—all Academy students will be assigned one-to-one and/or group tutoring support from both VUU scholars and retired educators.

C. **Expected student learning benefits** *(2-3 paragraphs maximum):* Students will demonstrate mastery of core content areas in the STEAM domains through several assessment tools, including but not limited to SOL assessments, NAEP assessments, SAT and ACT tests. In addition, students will have to complete two project-based assignments at each grade level as part of their portfolio designed to reflect the practical application of theory to real-world experiences.

Beyond demonstrating core content knowledge, students will also have to demonstrate an understanding of character education, soft skills, financial literacy, and a certification in one of four industry fields by the time they graduate. Students will be required to take electives designed to promote character education and help them master soft skills and enhance their social development like etiquette, personal finance, oral presentation and artistic expression.

Some specific objectives include:

- Enhance academic achievement
- Close the achievement gaps
- Reverse learning loss exacerbated by the pandemic
- Increase school attendance/engagement
- Decrease school-based disciplinary incidences and short-term/long-term suspensions
- Promote mental health wellness
- Cultivate and support family engagement
- Strengthen the Prekindergarten-to- college pipeline
- Develop community-to-opportunity pathways
- Increase and diversify the workforce
- Narrow the community-wealth gap
- Create stronger and more productive citizenry

D. **Expected teacher learning and professional development benefits** *(2-3 paragraphs maximum):* Professional development for The Academy Promise Teacher will focus on high-quality and intense online and in-person training, teaching innovation, curriculum development and data evaluation.

> The Academy Promise Teachers will benefit from the professional development series held within VUU's School of Education and the newly created Center for Teaching and Learning. Teachers will be exposed to pedagogical development courses often presented in VUU's post-graduate degree offerings, where peer-to-peer training will be emphasized, as well as high-quality curriculum and multi-pronged assessments of student growth and achievement.

> Moreover, The Academy Promise Teachers will have access to certificate level courses commonly taught within VUU's Weekend College and Center for Teaching and Learning. These certificates will focus on classroom management, teaching in an urban environment, curriculum development for multiple learners, using data to inform instruction, and classroom innovation. Through industry partnerships, The Academy Promise Teachers will have frequent exposure to local and statewide industry professionals in the STEAM fields to ensure content alignment with industry needs and trends.

E. **Content areas addressed**: Content areas addressed in VUU's The Academy curricula will be steeped in the requirements articulated in the Virginia Department of Education's Standards of Learning and will be based on science, math, reading/English and history/humanities and art, as well as technology and engineering-based content, and career development. In the Sciences, this includes earth, life, and physical science. In Mathematics, it includes number sense and operations, pre-algebra, algebra, geometry, spatial sense, measurement, functions**,** trigonometry, calculus, and statistics. In Art and Humanities, the focus will be on: US and World history, Current Events, Economics, and Civic Engagement---all integrated with performing and fine arts, instruction, and pedagogy.

> While the focus of VUU's The Academy is STEAM, our approach to STEAM will differ from most science and technology programs, as our instructional foundation will be rooted in reading and Language Arts, as STEM instructional research and test scores reveal huge deficits in this area that impact student learning.

F. **GOAL**
   State the overall proposed goal for the program: The goal of VUU The Academy is to strengthen the middle years program of the local school district to help ensure all students---specifically those who are at-risk-- are not only college and career ready, but can compete globally as critical thinkers, problem solvers and innovators.

G. **TIMELINE**

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

Coordinated stakeholder engagement will be the foundation of VUU's proposed planning process that will include feedback from several community charrettes, as well as the thought-leadership of several teams focusing on operations, student learning, teacher & staff professional development, student support services, parent engagement, community partnerships and fundraising, and curricula development.

Dec. '22	Jan. '23	Feb. -Mar. '23	Apr.-May '23	Jun.-Jul. '23	Aug.-Sept. '23	Oct.-Nov. '23	Dec. '23
Planning	Planning	Planning	Planning	Planning	Planning	Planning	Planning
Submit VUU Promise Academy Lab School Planning Grant	Planning Grant Approved/ Awarded Identification of planning Team & Team Leads Identification of Team objectives/ outcomes Hire project manager	Hire Academy ED/Principal **Host Planning Launch Meeting-- Introduction of Process/Team Members** Team Meetings begin	Team Meetings con't. School Visits begin Develop survey Community Charettes: Industry Parents Students	Team Meetings con't. School Visits con't Survey Distribution Community Charettes: Teachers Non-profits VUU faculty/students	Data aggregation & final analysis/ reports: (school visits survey results charettes) Final Team reports & recommenda-tions	Complete Lab School application Submit Lab School application for approval	VUU Lab School application review/ approval

Jan. '24- Aug. '24	Sept. '24	Sept. '25	Sept. '26	Sept. '27	Sept. '28
Implementation	**Implementation**	**Implementation**	**Implementation**	**Implementation**	**Implementation**
Lab School Launch- Phase 1	Lab School Launch Phase 2 School Opens 6-8th grades	Phase 3 9th grade added Lab School Annual Evaluation-- student outcomes/ operations/fiscal viability	Phase 4 10th grade added Lab School Annual Evaluation-- student outcomes/ operations/fiscal viability	Phase 5 11th grade added Lab School Annual Evaluation-- student outcomes/ operations/fiscal viability	Phase 6 12th grade added Lab School Annual Evaluation-- student outcomes/ operations/fiscal viability

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):**
Starting with 150 students in each class from the 6th through the 8th grades (50 students in each class) and will grow 50 students each subsequent year.

VUU Promise Academy will be for the student(s) who either demonstrates a high aptitude for STEAM subjects per SOL results and/or articulates high interest in STEAM fields and/or are considered "on the bubble" academically and at-risk as described by the Virginia Department of Education.

RPS currently has a plethora of enrichment opportunities for students who are considered Gifted and Talented, including specialty schools such as the IB program at Lucille Brown MS; CodeRVA, a regional high school for students interested in Coding and other technology programs; Richmond Community HS and Open HS, which are the district's popular specialty schools that are application based for high performing students; and of course the Governor's Schools-- regional, application-based schools for top performers throughout the Central Virginia region. On the other end, there are several remediation programs, and alternative education options for students performing below grade level, including the Richmond Alternative School.

There are few options, however, for those students who are on the brink of being successful in an educational setting but need more support to ensure said success.

VUU Promise Academy's rigorous educational content will be supported by instructional and teaching practices for optimal learning. Moreover, the innovative supportive elements listed in **Section 1b** of this application are designed to provide the necessary wrap-around supports research indicates are needed to ensure successful educational outcomes.

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	√
Third Grade		Tenth Grade	√
Fourth Grade		Eleventh Grade	√

| Fifth Grade | | Twelfth Grade | √ |

*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:** The Academy's student demographic will be comprised of those living in traditionally underserved/underrepresented communities and will include:
  Students living in areas of the City currently zoned for middle schools categorized by the state as non-accredited or accredited with conditions, and/or;
  Students from households with a median (or average) income of $75,000 or less, and/or;
  Students who live in one of the City's 6 housing projects.

  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 Academy will be targeted to at-risk students with a special focus on Science Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM). All content delivery will be undergirded by Career and Technical Education through exposure to career pathways and certification acquisition at the secondary level.

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 Academy's vision is to inspire and prepare all students with the STEAM-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to meet future challenges in the global workforce and their communities.

   STEAM Education is an approach to teaching and learning that combines **s**cience, **t**echnology, **e**ngineering, the **a**rts, and **m**ath to guide student inquiry, discussion, and problem-solving. Education experts, such as Andrew Baum (1988), say STEAM education is about more than developing practical skills alone. It also helps students develop the capacity to:

   - Take thoughtful risks
   - Engage in meaningful learning activities
   - Become resilient problem solvers
   - Embrace and appreciate collaboration
   - Work through the creative process

Students will have a chance to combine concepts and knowledge from different disciplines to create deeper understanding and solve real-world problems through meaningful, engaged learning. STEAM also incorporates the arts and sometimes the humanities.

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Recent research shows that STEAM is a promising approach to positively impacting student achievement and teacher efficacy. In a 2016 study, researchers investigated the impact of STEAM lessons on physical science learning in grades 3 to 5 in high poverty elementary schools in an urban district. Findings indicated that students who received just nine hours of STEAM instruction made improvements in their science achievement (Brouillette, L., & Graham, N.J.).

Another study from 2014 shows that connecting STEAM and literacy can positively impact cognitive development, increase literacy and math skills, and help students reflect meaningfully on their work and that of their peers *(Cunnington, Marisol, Andrea Kantrowitz, Susanne Harnett, and Aline Hill-Ries)*. This is further supported by a study on the relationship between theater arts and student literacy and mathematics achievement from 2014. *"Results showed that students whose language arts curricula were infused with theater arts often outperformed their control group counterparts, who received no arts integration, in both math and language arts" (Inoa, R., Weltsek, G., & Tabone, C.).*

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:**
   The VUU Promise Academy will be a collaborative initiative with parents, teachers, community groups, and local employers. Potential partners will include:
   - local public school districts, such as Richmond Public Schools
   - local, regional, and national employers in STEAM fields with interest in strengthening the local workforce pipeline of diverse talent, such as Altria, Genworth, Bank of America, Capital One, IBM, and Dominion Energy
   - local and regional community organizations, such as Communities In Schools (CIS), the Gloucester Institute, Junior Achievement, Higher Achievement and Leadership Metro Richmond

   Coordinated stakeholder engagement will be critical in both the planning and implementation phases of VUU Promise Academy's development. The planning process will include several community charrettes involving parents, teachers, local non-profits, as well as area businesses regarding their vision of the lab school and optimal student learning and outcomes. The planning group will be comprised of several teams that will focus on all aspects of the Lab School, including operations, curricula development & student learning, teaching & professional development, student supports & family engagement, and community partnerships & development.

   During the implementation phase, representatives from the aforementioned core groups will comprise the VUU Promise Academy's Advisory Board. This Board will work with the VUU Promise Academy Executive Director to provide direction and oversight of the Academy's budget, operations, and student learning outcomes.

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2. **If the Lab School is going to be in partnership with a local school division(s), please describe the partnership briefly:**
    VUU will work collaboratively with Richmond Public Schools to identify potential students, and collaborate on ways to address academic and operational gaps.

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.

A. **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:**
    As a preeminent Historically Black University (HBCU), Virginia Union University (VUU) has a history of educating a predominately African American population since its inception in 1865. The University has the demonstrated capacity to develop productive citizens living and working literally across the world as evidenced by Virginia's first black governor, alumnus, former Governor L. Douglas Wilder to Virginia Delegate Delores McQuinn to the late U.S. Congressman Donald McEachin, and the list goes on. VUU offers a comprehensive range of academic programs, in business, education, social work, and hospitality management, in addition to those in the arts and sciences and programs leading to bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees in education, data analytics, business entrepreneurship, biology, and information technology.

    However, VUU's leadership is aware that the pipeline from middle school to high school graduation to college matriculation is endangered. Daily news about young people being unsuccessful in school is blasted across the media. VUU recognizes that something must be done to help at-risk students remain in school and graduate.

    Over the years, Virginia Union is motivated to expand opportunities for at-risk students to be successful. Over the years, VUU has expanded its support of area youth in summer programs, scholarships, and federally funded TRIO supports throughout the Richmond area. Since the purpose of The Academy initiative is to increase student achievement, this planning grant is a perfect fit for helping VUU to assist in the promotion and thoughtful design of its Lab School.

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

Over the past four years and under the current leadership of Dr. Hakim Lucas, VUU has significantly increased partnerships with businesses, organizations, and individuals, as well as philanthropic giving by over thirty percent. VUU leaders understand that a realistic target of increasing partnerships as potential sustainable funding sources is necessary for VUU The Academy to thrive. Contacts are in the works with local, regional, and national employers in STEAM fields with interest in strengthening the local workforce pipeline of diverse talent, such as Altria, Genworth, Bank of America, Capital One, IBM, Dominion Energy, DuPont, and others. Elements of this list will include loyal recurring donors, building a pool of major donors that will infuse cash to support the Lab School, and expand partnerships with companies and corporations that sponsor events and/or provide in-kind services. Supplemental contributions from other organizations, i.e., civic groups, will help improve The Academy's capacity to become self-sustaining. If approved for a Lab School Planning Grant award, VUU will develop a timeline for its financial management plan for the Lab School.

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

VUU has identified three components that will be evaluated as potential barriers to the planning process. These include community sustainability, financial sustainability, and the organizational sustainability of the plan for the VUU Academy Lab School.

- To address community sustainability as a potential barrier to the planning process, VUU will engage a diversified group of individuals to help identify strengths and potential threats to the success of the Lab School. These individuals will include representatives from VUU, regional public school districts, such as Richmond Public Schools, community members, including parents and students, business members, civic groups, and relevant government agencies. Other agencies include local and regional community organizations, such as Communities In Schools (CIS), the Gloucester Institute, Junior Achievement, Higher Achievement and Leadership Metro Richmond, etc.
- The aim is to have a broad spectrum of the community to contribute ideas, resources and volunteer support for the Lab School. It is important that community members view the Lab School as an essential service to students and families from the targeted areas.
  To address financial sustainability as a potential barrier to the planning process, VUU's Leadership Team is keenly aware that its sustainability plan for the Lab School will be strengthened by establishing a diversified approach for fundraising strategies. The long-term fundraising efforts will depend upon raising money to support the school beyond the initial grant award. The efforts of a development director will help ensure donations from an expanded list of potential donors. The infrastructure of the Lab School plan will build upon existing programs and services. VUU and the public schools that will develop the plan will commit cash or in-kind contributions to the project when feasible. Furthermore, VUU will set forth concerted efforts to secure research funding, for example, to supplement the financial plan.

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To address organizational sustainability as a potential barrier to the planning process, VUU is poised to be a transformative force to have an impact on the greater Richmond community. VUU is committed to having sufficient administrative support and has identified highly competent staff to provide leadership for developing the planning grant. Organizationally, experienced staff will have access to necessary basic resources, i.e., computers, printers, access to the internet, telephones, etc. Staff will conduct short-and-long-term strategic planning that includes goal setting, timetables, and resource development.

All formal and informal partner relationships will be documented and evaluated for the values added to the operational efficiency of the Lab School plan. VUU is clear about what it wants to accomplish with the award of a Lab School Planning Grant: a well-defined plan for developing a Lab School to provide opportunities for increasing student achievement and the number of high school graduates entering college and/or the workforce.

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	Stipends and fees for identified Virginia Union University and Richmond Public Schools personnel identified to help oversee the development and work on planning efforts in curriculum development, operations, community & parental engagement, fundraising, and support services	98,200
2000 – Employee Benefits	% of fringe benefits for full time staff dedicated to facilitating the planning process	10,000

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CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF EXPENSES	FUNDING REQUESTED
3000 – Purchased/Contractual Services	Stipends/Fee for consultants & subject matter experts	80,000
4000 – Internal Services		
5000 – Other Services	Site visits and research	3,500
6000 – Materials and Supplies	Supplies, technology and materials for community meetings	8,300
Total		**200,000***

* 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.

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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

20