# Agenda Item: C

## Date: July 31, 2023

**Title:** **JMU – VDOE Documentation of Complete and Compliant Application**

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## Presenter: Dr. Jeremy Raley, Chief of Staff of the Virginia Department of Education

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## Purpose of Presentation

Review of documentation of complete and compliant College Partnership Laboratory School Application for “The Lab School for Innovation & Career Exploration,” a laboratory school proposal from James Madison University and Rockingham County Public Schools.

## Executive Summary

The laboratory school application entitled The Lab School for Innovation & Career Exploration (“JMU Application”) was originally received from James Madison University and Rockingham County Public Schools (“Applicants”) on February 14, 2023. In accordance with the College Partnership Laboratory School Application Process, the JMU Application was reviewed for completion and compliance by the Application Review Technical Expert Committee, a team of Virginia Department of Education Subject Matter Experts (“VDOE SME”). The goal of the VDOE SME is to document the needed technical expertise and provide counseling to the Applicants to identify and correct any potential deficiencies in the planning and implementation of the proposed College Partnership Laboratory School, determine compliance with state law or regulation, highlight potential problems or red flags with information contained in the JMU Application, and to identify aspects of the proposal that are especially exciting or unique.

Dr. Jeremy Raley, Chief of Staff of the Virginia Department of Education, coordinated the efforts of the VDOE SME team who reviewed the JMU Second Application for completeness and compliance. The VDOE SME team is comprised of the following VDOE staff:

* Dr. Jeremy Raley, Chief of Staff
* Mr. Kent Dickey, Deputy Director of Budget, Finance, and Operations
* Dr. Samantha Hollins, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services
* Ms. Melissa Velazquez, Assistant Superintendent of Policy and Communication
* Dr. Brendon Albon, Director of STEM and Innovation
* Mr. Jim Chapman, Director of Board Relations
* Ms. Maggie Clemmons, Director of Licensure and School Leadership
* Ms. Amy Siepka, Director of Accountability
* Ms. Rebecca Askew, Senior Policy Analyst

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

Counseling from VDOE SME review was provided to the Applicants in March, April and May of 2023 via phone call and written documentation from the VDOE SME. The Applicants analyzed the feedback constructively and concluded the process by providing a JMU Second Application which included all responses to each of the VDOE SME action discussion points. The JMU Second Application was received by VDOE on July 7, 2023. The VDOE SME met via conference call on July 17, 2023, to provide insights and feedback on the JMU Second Application for completion of this report to the Laboratory School Standing Committee. No additional feedback has been provided to the Applicants.

The approval of College Partnership Laboratory Schools is in alignment with Priority 1 of the [Board of Education Comprehensive Plan 2018-2023](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/1154/637946384285670000): provide high-quality, effective learning environments for all students.

VDOE staff has received a complete and compliant JMU Second Application from the Applicants as well as additional letters of support from various members of the JMU and Rockingham County Public School Community. This material is included in Attachment X.

## Action Requested

The JMU Second Application is being submitted to the College Partnership Laboratory Schools Standing Committee (“Standing Committee) for first review.

If accepted for first review with no additional comments or requests for information from the Standing Committee, the application will be posted for public comment on the VDOE website, consistent with the Standing Committee application process.

Public comment on the application will be compiled by VDOE staff and returned to the Standing Committee for final review at its next meeting.

## VDOE Recommendation

The concept of interdisciplinary curricular offerings and pre-professional career exploration proposed by the JMU Second Application is an innovative and desirable laboratory school program. With the students remaining enrolled in Rockingham County Public Schools, it appears JMU functions more as a program than a standalone Lab School. This is an acceptable approach to meeting the intent of the lab school concept.

The Applicants responded very well to all feedback and coaching provided by the VDOE SME team, and provided the additional information requested. Along with the JMU Second Application, the Applicants included five (5) letters of reference from JMU, Rockingham County Public School and Blue Ridge Community College board members supporting the proposed laboratory school.

The strengths of the JMU proposal targets a population of children who wouldn’t have the ability to explore various career options with the ability to intern in their selected occupation while in high school. In addition, the Applicants have a sustainable financial model for the operation of the lab school program.

Overall, the VDOE recommends the JMU Program is operational and ready to implement.

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## Previous Review or Action

No previous review or action by the Laboratory School Committee.

**Background Information and Statutory Authority:**

Subsection A of § [22.1-349.6](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter19.1/section22.1-349.6/) of the *Code of Virginia* states, in part, that “[t]he Board shall establish procedures for receiving, reviewing, and ruling upon applications and shall make a copy of any such procedures available to all interested parties upon request. . . . The Board’s review procedures shall establish a review committee that may include experts with the operation of similar schools located in other states.”