



COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP LABORATORY SCHOOLS
STANDING COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATION REPORT
College Partnership Laboratory School Application For:
University of Virginia

March 2024
VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

College Partnership Laboratory Schools (Lab Schools) have fueled innovation and excellence in preK-12 education across the nation. Some of the nation's most prestigious schools were started as Lab Schools. Virginia has identified Lab Schools as a critical part of ensuring a high-quality, innovative, and diverse educational ecosystem in the Commonwealth.

BACKGROUND OF THE COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP LABORATORY SCHOOL FUND

The College Partnership Laboratory Schools Fund (Fund), set out in § [22.1-349.2](#) of the *Code of Virginia*, was first established in 2010 for the purpose of establishing and supporting College Partnership Laboratory Schools. During its 2022 Session, the General Assembly appropriated \$100,000,000 to the Fund.

The Virginia Board of Education (Board) is authorized to award up to \$5,000,000 from the Fund for planning grants to entities pursuing the creation of new Lab Schools. Additionally, the Board is authorized to award up to \$20,000,000 from the Fund for initial start-up cost funding grants (Start-Up Grants) for entities approved by the Board and awarded a contract to create a new Lab School and to distribute the remaining balance (\$75,000,000 or more) in per-pupil operating funding grants (Per-Pupil Funding Operating Grants) from the Fund for entities with approved Lab Schools.

Section [22.1-349.2](#) of the *Code of Virginia* and [Item 137.C.44](#) of the 2022 Appropriation Act direct the Board to establish criteria and guidelines for the distribution and award of moneys from the Fund prior to disbursement.

PURPOSE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

The Board's College Partnership Laboratory Schools Standing Committee (Standing Committee) is appointed by the Board. The purpose of the Standing Committee is to assist the Board in its approval process of College Partnership Laboratory School Applications (Application) submitted by Eligible Entities (Applicant).

Once received from the Applicant, the Application is reviewed for completeness and compliance by the Virginia Department of Education (Department), who may also secure technical assistance and/or coaching as needed for the Applicant. The Standing Committee receives the complete and compliant Application from the Department, meets with the Applicant(s), provides opportunity for public comment on the Application, and delivers a report on its recommendation to the Board for their decision.

The recommendation report to the Board provides an objective review and assessment of the Applicant's ability to achieve quality student performance through evidence of organizational effectiveness that supports a visionary educational process which promotes a culture of continuous, sustainable learning.

SUMMARY OF APPLICATION ELEMENTS TO BE REVIEWED

The Standing Committee's review and consideration of Applications includes evaluation of the information found in eight elements of the Application, summarized as follows:

1. **Executive Summary:** Does the Applicant provide the summary and address the need for the Lab School, its goals, and objectives?
2. **Mission and Vision:** Does the Applicant clearly communicate a mission and vision, including identification of the targeted student population, for the proposed Lab School to succeed?
3. **Educational Program:** Does the curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning?
4. **Governance:** Do the organizational structure and the roles and responsibilities enumerated for the governing board demonstrate clear leadership for the successful management and support of the proposed Lab School?
5. **Management Structure:** Does the Applicant address recruiting, staffing, leadership, licensure, employment policies, and performance evaluations sufficiently to demonstrate success for proposed Lab School? In addition, how does the Applicant address parent and community involvement; student recruitment plan, open enrollment and waiting list; student conduct; start-up plan with tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals; co-curricular and extracurricular programs, and partnerships with school divisions?
6. **Financial Operations Information:** Has the Applicant provided and addressed financial assumptions, start-up and five-year budgets, anticipated fundraising contributions, insurance coverage, a sound facilities plan, transportation services, including for students with disabilities, and food service operations to successfully start and maintain operations?
7. **Placement Plan:** Does the Applicant provide a plan for effective communication and placement of school students, teachers, and employees in the event of termination or revocation of the contract, including a plan for student records, student transfers, assistance to employees, and a close-out plan related to financial obligations and audits?
8. **Other Assurances and Requirement:** Does the Applicant demonstrate processes in place to implement and monitor federal and state compliance with regulations and waivers, including compliance with the federal *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act*, records retention schedules, and the *Virginia Freedom of Information Act*? Does the Applicant document collaborative partnerships with public school divisions and address conflicts of interest?

Public Comment: In addition to the elements found in the Application, the Standing Committee reviews and considers any public comments received when developing its recommendation and report for the Board.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The Standing Committee's recommendation report to the Board includes the Report Elements criteria outlined below for the Board's consideration and decision whether to approve a Lab School Application.

- I. **Overall Element Assessment:** The overall recommendation of the Standing Committee for this Element of the Application.
- II. **Element Rubric Rating:** The Standing Committee's recommendation of the degree the Element defines areas of strength and/or opportunities for improvement.

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures
	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement

- III. **Public Comment Assessment:** The Standing Committee assessment of public comments received on the Application.
- IV. **Areas Requiring VDOE Reinforcement:** The Standing Committee's recommendation for VDOE operational expertise that may be required by the Applicant in various areas of the Lab School's operations.

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

ELEMENT 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The University of Virginia Innovation Hub (“UVA Lab School”) is a collaborative partnership between University of Virginia (“UVA”) and the Charlottesville City Public Schools (“CCPS”), (“Applicant”). The UVA Lab School concept will create an innovation hub that engages all Charlottesville Middle School (“CMS”) students in personally meaningful, computationally rich, and interdisciplinary learning experiences, initially in computer science education, and in the future, in other educational disciplines. Working with community-based partnerships to provide the catalyst to engage students to inspire curiosity, fuel innovation, and empower students to solve problems and pursue lifelong learning. The UVA Lab School will leverage the strengths of the UVA Department of Education including the Innovation Academy Fellowship, pre-service teacher placement, research, substitute teachers, as well as community partners and after-school pathways for students.

The UVA Innovation Hub Lab School will be founded on three guiding principles to improve student outcomes:

1. Developing a community of practice around education that incorporates interdisciplinary, project-based, computationally rich learning experiences.
2. Engaging students by incorporating their voices and choices throughout the learning process.
3. Making meaningful community connections to engage students, teachers, and families in real-world problem-solving, mentorship, and career explorations.

With solid academic curriculum theory proposed supported by the UVA School of Education and Human Development, the Standing Committee highly recommends the UVA Innovation Hub Lab School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures
X	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement

PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

Lab School Application for University of Virginia

VDOE will support the applicant through the development of the contract with the Board and will provide technical assistance as needed as the school begins operations.

ELEMENT 2: MISSION AND VISION

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The mission of the UVA Innovation Hub at CMS is to engage all students in personally meaningful, computationally rich and interdisciplinary learning experiences.

The vision of the UVA Innovation at CMS is to provide educational opportunities that inspire curiosity, fuel innovation, and empower all students to solve problems and pursue lifelong learning.

The UVA Innovation Hub at CMS will adhere to the provisions of § 22.1-349.3 of the Code of Virginia through its partnership between UVA and CCS. The lab school will be embedded in CMS. The lab school will make use of the existing out-of-district application process in place at CCS and modify it to support a lottery system. Lottery seats will be based on availability. A governing board will operate the lab school including budget preparation, contracts, and personnel matters and other responsibilities outlined by an MOU between the partners. CCS consistently upholds the Standards of Quality (SOQ) as specified in sections § 22.1-253.13:1-8. The CCS commitment to the Virginia Regulations for accrediting public schools, especially the SOA sections 8VAC20-131-390 to 430, is consistent and strong.

The Applicant's mission and vision clearly outlines the level of innovation anticipated and the targeted student population. With completed planning and proposed programs and processes in place, the Standing Committee highly recommends the UVA Innovation Hub Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures
X	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement

PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

VDOE will support the applicant through the development of the contract with the Board and will provide technical assistance as needed as the school begins operations.

ELEMENT 3: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

Students enrolled in the Innovation Hub, which will be housed primarily at CMS and includes all middle school students at CMS and in CCPS, will participate in the unique offerings of the UVA Innovation Hub. The lab school acts as a dynamic center for experiential learning, where 6th-grade students begin their middle school journey with a focus on exploring diverse interests and developing essential technical and real-world problem-solving skills. As students progress to 7th grade, they undertake two comprehensive, interdisciplinary projects designed to provide practical experience and exposure to various industries, enhancing their understanding of real-world applications of their studies. The culmination of this integrative lab school experience is seen in the 8th grade, where students develop capstone projects. These projects represent a synthesis of their learning journey and prepare them for future academic and professional challenges.

The UVA School of Education and Human Development (“UVA EHD”) is invested the UVA Innovation Hub Lab School through a fellowship tailored to provide substantial support to six CMS educators annually. Designed as a year-long, cohort-based program, it offers flexibility to meet the unique learning needs of each teacher. These include personalized coaching and mentoring, tailored professional learning experiences, and valuable externship opportunities, leveraging UVA's extensive network and resources. This collaboration is focused on empowering educators to implement student-driven, computationally-rich Project-Based Learning (PBL) experiences, utilizing community assets effectively. The fellowship culminates in the awarding of a certificate of completion from UVA EHD, symbolizing the professional growth and development achieved by the participants. Through this fellowship, UVA demonstrates a strong commitment to enhancing the quality of education at CMS and fostering a sustainable, innovative educational ecosystem.

The UVA Innovation Hub Lab School's forward-thinking approach aims to redefine the landscape of middle school education. With the backing of the UVA EHD investment in curriculum development and teacher support, the Standing Committee highly recommends the UVA Innovation Hub Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures
X	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement

PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

The Applicant has proposed a solid, theoretical curriculum/instructional approach. VDOE can provide guidance on any statutory requirements related to expeditionary learning, internships, etc.

ELEMENT 4: GOVERNANCE

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The Applicant has identified a multi-tiered governance structure, with a governing board comprised of five members from the UVA Innovation Hub Lab School partnership including two members from the UVA School of Education and Human Development, one member from the UVA Equity Center and two members from CCPS plus two additional members including one member representing one of our community partners and one member representing the Family/Student advisory council. Each member of the Governing Board shall serve a two-year term, except for the local industry rep and Family/Student advisory council rep who shall each serve a one-year term.

The Applicant's proposed organizational structure and the roles and responsibilities enumerated for the governing board demonstrate clear leadership for the successful management and support of the Lab School. The Standing Committee highly recommends the UVA Innovation Hub Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures
X	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement

PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

UVA Innovation Hub Laboratory School has provided organizational charts as well as a draft document for governance. VDOE can provide guidance on any requirements related to the confines of the state statute that may be required.

ELEMENT 5: MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The Applicant has addressed all requested areas of management structure. UVA and EHD personnel will work with Lab School personnel to develop position narratives, support candidate screening, provide applicant tracking and reporting, facilitate candidate communications, advise best practices for reference checks, produce offer letters, and provide information about life and work in Charlottesville.

Lab School personnel hired by the University of Virginia will be employees of the University of Virginia and will be granted the same employment benefits given to other University of Virginia employees.

The UVA Innovation Hub Lab School is committed to ensuring that all personnel working in the UVA Innovation Hub possess the qualifications and expertise to deliver and support exceptional learning experiences. The teachers who join the Innovation Academy Fellowship and the Lab Manager shall hold a license issued by the Board or be eligible to hold and be working toward a Virginia teaching license.

The Applicant will make use of the existing out-of-district application process in place at CCS and modify it to support a lottery system. Lottery seats will be based on availability will use the Lab School Standing Committee's Best Practices on Administration of Lotteries for College Partnership Laboratory Schools to develop a fully operational lottery process.

The Applicant provided detailed information on overall school management including personnel management that sufficiently demonstrates success for the proposed Lab School. The Standing Committee highly recommends the UVA Innovation Hub Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures
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PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

VDOE may need to provide guidance on the proposed school lottery process.

ELEMENT 6: FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONS INFORMATION

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The Applicant has provided and addressed financial assumptions, start-up, and five-year budgets. The Applicant is requesting a total of \$6.35 million in operational per-pupil funding support over a four-year period. The budget indicates the annual funding amount requested decreases each year as other funding sources are secured and the Lab School becomes self-sustaining, thereby maximizing the return on investment of public funds.

UVA including EHD and the Equity Center have financial controls and audit requirements that they adhere to annually and on an ongoing basis. The same is true of CCS. Both parties will retain existing procedures when governing and operating the lab school.

The Applicants have planned for philanthropic and other fund raising by leveraging the existing UVA EHD Foundation. The Applicants provided a Sustainability Plan Overview which outlines the Applicant's goal to work with philanthropic, community and corporate entities on the specific ways they can support fundraising/revenue generating options and work to provide federal, state, and private funding to replace the Lab School grant funding over the next five (5) years.

The Applicant provided detailed budget and financial assumption information as well as its processes to provide successful operational requirements. The Standing Committee highly recommends the UVA Innovation Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures
X	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement

PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

None at this time.

ELEMENT 7: PLACEMENT PLAN

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

As the Applicant's Lab School is embedded at CMS, the placement plan includes the current process for CMS students.

Upon closure of the Applicant's Lab School, UVA would conduct a comprehensive review of all financial records, ensuring compliance with state, local, and university accounting standards. A report will be prepared and shared with relevant stakeholders for transparency and compliance purposes.

The Applicant's meets the placement plan requirements for College Partnership Laboratory Schools. The Standing Committee highly recommends the UVA Innovation Hub Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
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X	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement

PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

In the unlikely event the Lab School is terminated, VDOE may need to audit/identify unused funds requiring return to the State.

ELEMENT 8: OTHER ASSURANCES AND REQUIREMENTS

OVERALL ELEMENT ASSESSMENT:

The Applicant demonstrates and currently operates in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, including the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. The Standing Committee highly recommends the UVA Innovation Hub Laboratory School to the Board.

ELEMENT RUBRIC RATING:

	Not Evident	Little or no indication exists for implementation activities
	Emerging/Partial detail	Indicates preliminary stages of implementation for some practices and procedures
X	Operational/ Ready to implement	Indicates practices and procedures fully described and ready to implement

PUBLIC COMMENT ASSESSMENT:

The application received one public comment and numerous institutional endorsements that supported the application.

AREAS REQUIRING VDOE REINFORCEMENT:

None at this time.

CONCLUDING REPORT COMMENTS

The goals of the UVA Innovation Hub, which include (1) developing a community of practice around education that incorporates interdisciplinary, project-based, computationally-rich learning experiences, (2) engaging students by incorporating their voices and choices throughout the learning process, and (3) making meaningful community connections to engage students, teachers, and families in real-world problem-solving, mentorship, and career explorations, are responsive to the local needs as determined by the unique “community problems of practice” model implemented by the Innovation Hub.

By transforming school experiences in a way that elevates the developmental needs of young adolescents through student-driven, community- and design-based projects, the UVA Innovation Hub Lab School aims to elevate the voice and agency of middle school students in ways that align with research-based practices for positive youth development and asset-based pedagogy. This approach addresses current high priority needs at CMS including:

- Increasing student engagement in school and in science.
- Professional development that helps teachers connect different content areas in a way that is relevant to and builds on the assets of their students.
- Increasing student performance on state assessments.

With solid academic curriculum theory proposed and the partnership of UVA EHD, the Standing Committee highly recommends the University Virginia Laboratory School to the Board.

As this College Laboratory School Application is in the operational development stages, the Standing Committee has noted the areas where the VDOE may be required to provide operational assistance as the Applicant’s Lab School begins to fully develop and grow.

After completing an objective review and thorough assessment of the Applicant’s ability to achieve quality student performance through evidence of organizational effectiveness that supports a visionary educational process which promotes a culture of continuous, sustainable learning, the Standing Committee highly recommends the UVA Innovation Hub ATI Laboratory School to the Board.