

Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: C

Date: February 27, 2014

Title	Final Review of Request for Approval of an Innovative Program Opening Prior to Labor Day from Mecklenburg County Public Schools		
Presenter	Ms. Anne D. Wescott, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications Dr. James Thornton, Mecklenburg County Public Schools		
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Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

Previous Review or Action:

Previous review and action. Specify date and action taken below:

Date: January 16, 2014

Action: First review

Action Requested:

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:

	Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning
	Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness
	Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators
X	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

Goal 6: The review of the request to waive the requirement that the school year would begin prior to Labor Day, pursuant to § 22.1-79.1 of the *Code of Virginia* relates to the goal that the Board will provide leadership in the development and implementation of state and federal laws and regulations in ways that provide sound policies for student success.

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

Section 22.1-79.1 of the *Code of Virginia* prohibits local school boards from adopting school calendars that require schools to open prior to Labor Day unless a waiver is granted by the Board for "good cause." The conditions under which the Board may grant such waivers are outlined in the *Code*. The provision that permits the Board to approve a waiver for an experimental or innovative program may be found in § 22.1-79.1 as follows:

§ 22.1-79.1. Opening of the school year; approvals for certain alternative schedules.

- A. Each local school board shall set the school calendar so that the first day students are required to attend school shall be after Labor Day. The Board of Education may waive this requirement based on a school board certifying that it meets one of the good cause requirements of subsection B.
- B. For purposes of this section, "good cause" means:
1. A school division has been closed an average of eight days per year during any five of the last 10 years because of severe weather conditions, energy shortages, power failures, or other emergency situations;
 2. A school division is providing, in the school year for which the waiver is sought, an instructional program or programs in one or more of its elementary or middle or high schools, excluding Virtual Virginia, which are dependent on and provided in one or more elementary or middle or high schools of another school division that qualifies for such waiver. However, any waiver granted by the Board of Education pursuant to this subdivision shall only apply to the opening date for those schools where such dependent programs are provided;
 3. A school division is providing its students, in the school year for which the waiver is sought, with an experimental or innovative program which requires an earlier opening date than that established in subsection A of this section and which has been approved by the Department of Education pursuant to the regulations of the Board of Education establishing standards for accrediting public schools. However, any waiver or extension of the school year granted by the Board of Education pursuant to this subdivision or its standards for accrediting public schools for such an experimental or innovative program shall only apply to the opening date for those schools where such experimental or innovative programs are offered generally to the student body of the school. For the purposes of this subdivision, experimental or innovative programs shall include instructional programs that are offered on a year-round basis by the school division in one or more of its elementary or middle or high schools; or
 4. A school division is entirely surrounded by a school division that has an opening date prior to Labor Day in the school year for which the waiver is sought. Such school division may open schools on the same opening date as the surrounding school division....

For the 2013-2014 school year, 57 school divisions have a waiver for weather-related reasons; six have dependent programs; ten are entirely surrounded by a school division that has an opening date prior to Labor Day; three school divisions have one or more schools with waivers because they are year-round schools; and two school divisions have waivers for innovative or experimental programs that are not year-round schools. Mecklenburg County Public Schools has had a weather-related waiver for many years.

However, some of the school divisions that have a weather-related waiver, including Mecklenburg County, are in jeopardy of losing their waivers because Virginia hasn't had much snow or other severe weather conditions recently. The 2012 General Assembly added language to the Appropriation Act to maintain current waivers, and the 2013 General Assembly extended the waiver through the 2013-2014

school year. The Governor's 2014-2016 Budget Bill would extend the waiver for two additional years. Item 136.A.17 of HB 30 and SB 30 says:

To provide additional flexibility, notwithstanding the provisions of § 22.1-79.1 of the Code of Virginia, any school division that was granted a waiver regarding the opening date of the school year for the 2011-12 school year under the good cause requirements shall continue to be granted a waiver for the 2014-15 school year and the 2015-2016 school year.

Summary of Important Issues:

Mecklenburg County Public Schools is basing its waiver request on five different programs designed to ensure that its students are successful academically, graduating on time, and developing the skills to be productive citizens in the 21st century work force. The five programs are:

- Project based learning (PBL), emphasizing 21st century skills;
- Career and character education;
- Expanded dual enrollment, in conjunction with Southside Virginia Community College;
- Residency program with Longwood University for teachers pursuing a master's degree in special education; and
- Literacy camp with Longwood University for at-risk students.

Elementary Schools (Chase City, Clarksville, LaCrosse, and South Hill Elementary Schools) and Middle Schools (Bluestone and Park View Middle Schools)

This school division is implementing a program for Career and Character education in grades Pre-K-12. This program would partner with Longwood, Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC), and dual enrollment students. High school students would be required to complete a community service project in which they partner with an elementary or middle school classroom to provide support and mentoring in character and career education. This would be a structured, yearlong curriculum which the high school students would begin during the first week of school with their adopted classroom to assist with a series of activities that will focus on developing career readiness and character education. Because the high school students are enrolled in dual enrollment programs, the school divisions requests a waiver based on the needs of this program and the dual enrollment of the high school mentors. The school division also bases its waiver request on its relationship with SVCC, which opened August 21, 2013, for fall instruction and onsite visits to that campus.

The school division is partnering with Longwood University to provide a yearlong residency program for teachers who are pursuing a Master's Degree in Special Education. These teachers will be placed in the elementary and middle schools as additional support. The request indicated that successful implementation will require correlation of calendars.

The school division is also working with Longwood University to develop an on-campus literacy camp for at-risk students in grades 4-6. A waiver is requested to coordinate the school calendar so that the camp can be held in late May or early June to use the Longwood campus. The camp will focus on providing a solid foundation in literacy, career and college readiness, and exposure to cultural activities.

Project based learning began as a pilot program in 2012-2013 with the sixth grade and has expanded to all four middle and high schools, in grades 5, 6, 7, 9 and dual enrollment classes, based on parent and student interest. It is a student-centered approach that emphasizes technology, critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and collaborative learning. Mecklenburg County Public Schools is requesting a pre-Labor Day waiver in order to coordinate the professional development that is held

during the summer with other school divisions in the region and with Longwood University.

High Schools (Bluestone and Park View High Schools)

The waiver request includes the following dual enrollment program options that will lead to either an Associate Degree or certification:

- Regional Governor’s school;
- General studies with an option to transfer to a four-year college;
- Pre-engineering with an option to transfer to a four-year college;
- High performance manufacturing technology program with degree concentrations in electricity, air conditioning and heating, and industrial technology; and
- Certificates in computer and office basics, culinary arts, nurse’s aide, and agribusiness.

As the school division participates in the regional Governor’s school, § 22.1-26 (D) of the *Code of Virginia* would apply, which says: “Joint or regional schools, such as academic year Governor's Schools, may set the school calendar so that the first day students are required to attend school shall comport with the calendar of any of the participating school divisions, including those granted a waiver, as prescribed in § 22.1-79.1. Such calendar must be approved by the governing board of the joint or regional school.”

In addition, the school division indicated that the dual enrollment programs require that the students operate on the SVCC calendar. Currently, there are 382 students at Bluestone High School and 446 students at Park View High School enrolled in a dual enrollment class through SVCC. This represents 60 percent of the students at Bluestone High School and 57 percent of the students at Park View High School.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

The impact on state funds for this request is expected to be minimal.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

Following the February 27 meeting, Department of Education staff will notify the School Board and the Superintendent of Mecklenburg County Public Schools of the decision of the Board of Education.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education deny Mecklenburg County Public Schools’ request for its elementary and middle schools to begin school prior to Labor Day, but to approve the request for its high school to begin schools before Labor Day. The proposal for the elementary and middle schools do not comport with the provisions of § 22.1-79.1 of the *Code of Virginia*.

**Guidelines for Considering and Approving Requests
for Pre-Labor Day Openings
Approved by the Board of Education on March 28, 2013**

Statutory Authority

Section [22.1-79.1](#) of the *Code of Virginia* governs the conditions under which the Board of Education may grant a waiver to a local school board to open school prior to Labor Day.

§ [22.1-79.1](#). Opening of the school year; approvals for certain alternative schedules.

A. Each local school board shall set the school calendar so that the first day students are required to attend school shall be after Labor Day. The Board of Education may waive this requirement based on a school board certifying that it meets one of the good cause requirements of subsection B.

B. For purposes of this section, "good cause" means:

1. A school division has been closed an average of eight days per year during any five of the last 10 years because of severe weather conditions, energy shortages, power failures, or other emergency situations;

2. A school division is providing, in the school year for which the waiver is sought, an instructional program or programs in one or more of its elementary or middle or high schools, excluding Virtual Virginia, which are dependent on and provided in one or more elementary or middle or high schools of another school division that qualifies for such waiver. However, any waiver granted by the Board of Education pursuant to this subdivision shall only apply to the opening date for those schools where such dependent programs are provided;

3. A school division is providing its students, in the school year for which the waiver is sought, with an experimental or innovative program which requires an earlier opening date than that established in subsection A of this section and which has been approved by the Department of Education pursuant to the regulations of the Board of Education establishing standards for accrediting public schools. However, any waiver or extension of the school year granted by the Board of Education pursuant to this subdivision or its standards for accrediting public schools for such an experimental or innovative program shall only apply to the opening date for those schools where such experimental or innovative programs are offered generally to the student body of the school. For the purposes of this subdivision, experimental or innovative programs shall include instructional programs that are offered on a year-round basis by the school division in one or more of its elementary or middle or high schools; or

4. A school division is entirely surrounded by a school division that has an opening date prior to Labor Day in the school year for which the waiver is sought. Such school division may open schools on the same opening date as the surrounding school division....

The Board of Education will consider the following guidelines in approving requests of local school boards to open one or more schools prior to Labor Day.

Waiver by Superintendent on Board's Behalf

The Board of Education delegates to the Superintendent of Public Instruction the authority to approve, on its behalf, a local school board's request for a waiver to open all schools in the division prior to Labor Day if the school division meets one of the following good cause requirements of subsection § 22.1-79.1 B.

- The school division has been closed an average of eight days per year during any five of the last 10 years because of severe weather conditions, energy shortages, power failures, or other emergency situations. (§ 22.1-79.1 B. 1)
- The school division is entirely surrounded by a school division that has an opening date prior to Labor Day in the school year for which the waiver is sought. Such school division may open schools on the same opening date as the surrounding school division. (§ 22.1-79.1 B. 4)

Waiver by Board of Education Action

The Board of Education will consider a local school board's request for a waiver to open one or more schools in its division prior to Labor Day if one of the following good cause requirements of subsection § 22.1-79.1.B. are met. The Board will not provide advisory opinions or hypothetical waivers. The local school board must certify that if granted a waiver, the division intends to provide the program in the school year for which the waiver is being sought.

- The school division is providing an instructional program or programs in the schools for which the waiver is requested, excluding *Virtual Virginia*, which are dependent on and provided in one or more schools of another school division that qualifies for a waiver to open prior to Labor Day. Any waiver granted by the Board of Education pursuant to this provision shall *only* apply to the opening date for those schools where such dependent programs are provided. (§ 22.1-79.1 B. 2)
- The school division is providing its students with an experimental or innovative program, which *requires* the school to open prior to Labor Day. Any waiver granted by the Board of Education pursuant to this provision shall *only* apply to the opening date for those schools where such experimental or innovative programs are offered generally to the student body of the school. (§ 22.1-79.1 B. 3)

Experimental and Innovative Program Considerations

- In accordance with § 22.1-79.1 of the Code of Virginia, experimental or innovative programs shall include instructional programs which are offered on a year-round basis by a school division in one or more of its elementary, middle, or high schools.

- An *experimental program* is defined, for purposes of a waiver, as a program which is operated under controlled circumstances and which is designed to test and to establish, by objective measures, the positive cognitive effect of an educational theory. The experimental program must be offered generally to the student body of the school.
- An *innovative program* is defined, for purposes of a waiver, as an educational program that implements creative, original, or new ideas or methods and are likely to result in better outcomes for student participants. The innovative program must be offered generally to the student body of the school.
- Any experimental or innovative program must ensure parental and community involvement.

Application for Waiver

1. The initial request for a waiver to approve an experimental or innovative program, including a year-round school program, shall be submitted to the Board of Education for approval. Once the initial approval is granted by the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction is hereby delegated authority to continue to approve the waiver in subsequent years, unless the Board places conditions or time limits on its approval, or unless the Superintendent determines that the conditions under which the approval was granted to the local school board are changed.
2. The local school board shall submit annually to the Superintendent of Public Instruction certification of eligibility for a waiver of the “good cause” requirements of § 22.1-79.1, *Code of Virginia*. Such certification shall be made in a manner prescribed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. School divisions must maintain evidence that such “good cause” conditions have been met.
3. To request approval of a waiver for weather-related or other emergency conditions, the local school board shall submit information annually indicating that the school division has been closed for an average of eight days per year in any five of the past ten years because of severe weather conditions, energy shortages, power failures, or other emergency conditions.
4. To request initial approval of a waiver to open before Labor Day by a school division that is completely surrounded by another school division that has been approved for a waiver, the school division shall submit the request to the Superintendent of Public Instruction by letter signed by the superintendent and the chairman of the local school board. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall determine that the school division is completely surrounded by another school division, and that the other school division has been granted a waiver to open before Labor Day. Once the initial waiver is granted, the local school board shall submit information annually to the Superintendent of Public Instruction indicating that the conditions under which a waiver was granted have not changed.
5. To request approval of a waiver for a dependent program, the local school board shall submit information annually indicating that each school for which a waiver is requested provides an instructional program, excluding Virtual Virginia, which is dependent upon a school in another division that qualifies for a waiver.
6. To request initial approval of a waiver for a pre-Labor Day opening for an experimental or innovative program, the local school division shall submit such request to the Board of

Education on a form prescribed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction at least 180 calendar days prior to the expected implementation date. Such a request shall set forth a thorough explanation of the experimental or innovative program as well as the specific reasons that would compel a pre-Labor Day opening. The Department is available throughout the application process to provide technical assistance to the applicant. The following procedures apply to the initial application for experimental or innovative programs:

- a. The experimental or innovative program must be approved by the Board pursuant to its *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* at 8 VAC 20-131-290. The request must include:
 - 1) The names of the participating schools and the school division requesting the waiver.
 - 2) The purpose and objectives of the experimental/innovative/year-round program:
Describe how the school meets the definition of experimental or innovative or year-round school and its goals and objectives. Include the title of the program or activity, a program description, the rationale for the program, the number and names of all schools involved, the names of any other organizations, including colleges, universities, and other postsecondary organizations and community organizations that are involved in the program, the grades served, the names of any other school divisions involved in the program, and other relevant information.
 - 3) An explanation of the necessity for opening prior to Labor Day, including the proposed school year calendar's opening and closing dates as well as a general description of the school calendar and duration of the waiver. This explanation must show that this request meets the "good cause" requirements of §22.1-79.1. B.3, *Code of Virginia*.
 - 4) Anticipated outcomes, including an explanation as to why it is believed the program will be a success.
 - 5) Number of students affected, including demographic information describing the students who will be attending and the community the school serves.
 - 6) Evaluation procedures including mechanisms for measuring goals and objectives, and analysis of data, to determine how this program will support an expected increase in proficiency in student academic achievement and any achievement gap.
 - 7) Other anticipated outcomes.
 - 8) Any other information that will support the request for a Pre-Labor Day waiver.

Each pre-Labor Day waiver request must be approved by the local school board and signed and dated by the chairman of the school board and the school superintendent and forwarded to Superintendent of Public Instruction.

- b. Any waiver or extension of the school year granted by the Board pursuant to the experimental or innovative program provisions contained in § 22.1-79.1 of the *Code of Virginia*, or the Board's *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* shall apply only to the opening date for those schools where such experimental or innovative programs are offered generally to the student body of the school.
- c. To request approval of a waiver for a pre-Labor Day opening for an experimental or innovative program subsequent to the Board of Education's initial approval, unless the Board of Education has specified conditions under which the waiver request must go back to the Board for approval, or the Superintendent determines that the conditions under which the initial approval was granted to the local school board have changed, the local school board

shall submit information annually to the Superintendent of Public Instruction as part of the pre-Labor Day waiver self-certification process for public schools with pre-Labor Day waivers. The submission shall include evidence of the results achieved throughout the experimental or innovative program in prior years.

Reports to the Board of Education

- The Board of Education may request that the Superintendent of Public Instruction provide a report to the Board regarding the status of certifications submitted and waivers granted under the above-stated policies. Such report shall be provided in a manner and at a time as agreed to by the Superintendent and the President of the Board and shall include information deemed pertinent by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Any information required to be submitted to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for a pre-Labor Day waiver shall be submitted to the:

Office of Policy
Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120
Policy@doe.virginia.gov
804-225-2092

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF EDUCATION
P.O. Box 2120
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23218-2120

**REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF CERTAIN ACCREDITING STANDARDS
AND/OR APPROVAL
OF AN INNOVATIVE OR EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM**

The *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, ([8 VAC 20-131-10 et seq.](#)) sets the minimum standards public schools must meet to be accredited by the Board of Education. Accreditation of public schools is required by the Standards of Quality (§§ [22.1-253.13:1 et seq.](#)). The annual accrediting cycle for public schools is July 1 through June 30.

This cover sheet, with the supporting documentation, must be submitted to the Department of Education for review and recommendation to the Board at least 90 days prior to the beginning of an accrediting cycle or the proposed implementation of the program or activity that precipitates the request for the waiver. The types of waivers available and the corresponding section of the standards are indicated below. Please attach additional sheets or information deemed appropriate. (The Board will consider this request in its monthly meeting and school divisions **are required** to appear before the board **in person or electronically** to explain a waiver request.)

SCHOOL DIVISION Mecklenburg County Public Schools

TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY Project-Based Learning (PBL), Career Discovery/Character Education, Residency Program for Master's in Special Education,

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:

- Approval of an Alternative to the Standard School Year and School Day ([8 VAC 20-131-150](#))
- Approval of an Alternative Accreditation Plan ([8 VAC 20-131-280.D](#))
- Approval of an Experimental Program (§ [22.1-79.1](#) of the *Code of Virginia* and [8 VAC 20-131-290.D](#))
- Approval of an Innovative Program (§ [22.1-79.1](#) of the *Code of Virginia* and [8 VAC 20-131-290.D](#))
- Approval of a Waiver of Other Provision(s) of the Standards ([8 VAC 20-131-350](#))
(Complete Pages 1 and 3 of the application only.)

SCHOOL OR SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED PROGRAM/ACTIVITY Chase City Elementary School, Clarksville Elementary School, LaCrosse Elementary School, South Hill Elementary School, Bluestone Middle School, Park View Middle School, Bluestone High School, and Park View High School

Date Approved
by the Local School Board

Signature
Chairman of the School Board

Submission Date

Signature
Division Superintendent

SCHOOL DIVISION Mecklenburg County Public Schools

TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY Project-Based Learning (PBL), Career Discovery/Character Education, Residency

Program for Master's in Special Education.

IF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM IS EXPERIMENTAL OR INNOVATIVE, FOR EACH SCHOOL EXPLAIN HOW THIS IS SO AND PROVIDE A PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, INCLUDING THE TYPE OF PROGRAM, ITS PURPOSE, THE GRADES SERVED, DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION DESCRIBING THE STUDENTS WHO WILL BE ATTENDING, THE RATIONALE FOR THE PROGRAM, THE PROGRAM'S GOALS, EVALUATION PROCEDURES, AND OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION.

Summary of Major Elements:

The Mecklenburg County Public School Board is requesting pre-Labor Day Waiver for implementation of several innovative programs which require the ongoing support of Region VIII schools (including Nottoway, Cumberland, and Charlotte), Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC), and Longwood University. These programs are implemented in an effort to ensure our students are not only successful in the new Virginia Standards of Learning but also in graduating on time and developing the skills necessary to be a productive and contributing citizen in the 21st century work force. These programs are:

- Project Based Learning (PBL) with an emphasis on 21st century skills.
- Career and Character Education program designed for pre-K-12.
- Expanded Dual Enrollment program for high school students
- Residency Program with Longwood University for teachers seeking a Master's in Special Education
- Literacy Camp with Longwood University for at-risk students

Project Based Learning:

In regards to the PBL program, successful implementation requires that partnering school systems in Region VIII (with the help of NCLB office) and Longwood University work collaboratively to provide the professional development necessary to train our teachers and administration effectively. With our calendars aligned over the past year, we have been able to offer the following regional professional development:

- Summer Odyssey Training for PBL pilot teachers (July 2012 for 1 week)
- Summer Curriculum Training for PBL pilot teachers (August for 1 week)
- Odyssey Training in Project Based Learning/Deeper Learning (December 2012) for regional teachers
- Odyssey Training (February and March 2013) to train new teachers that will teach through Project Based Learning/Deeper Learning in the 2013-2014 school year
- Curriculum Training for PBL/Deeper Learning (May 2013 for 6 days) . Curriculum and project development for teachers preparing to teach PBL/Deeper Learning in the 2013-2014 school year.

Continued support for our teachers and administrators is necessary to build capacity in our schools for this innovative and researched based approach to learning. It is imperative that we continue this collaborative effort to provide professional development opportunities during the summer and school year. This can only be accomplished if we align our calendars. Through partnering, we are able to enrich, support, network, and share the costs that are attributed to the ongoing professional learning.

Career and Character Education program pre-K-12:

As a complement to the PBL program, we are also implementing a program for Career and Character education in grades Pre-K-12. This program would partner with Longwood, Southside Virginia Community College, and our Dual Enrollment students, and our K-8 students. As part of their graduation requirements, our dual enrollment students will be required to complete a community service project in which they partner with an elementary or middle school classroom to provide support and mentoring in character and career education. This will be a structured, year-long curriculum which they will begin during the first week of school with their adopted classroom to assist with a series of activities that will focus on developing career readiness and character education. Some of the topics will include:

- Bully Awareness and Prevention;
- Habits of Heart and Mind Curriculum which includes a series of lessons on respect, creativity, integrity, effective communication, and perseverance;
- Career pathway activities.

Effective implementation of this program requires that the elementary and middle school calendars align with the high school(dual enrollment)/community college calendar to maximize our resources and build a community of learners in career and character awareness. This program will serve not only our elementary and middle students by providing them with role models, but it will build a sense of community service and compassion in our students who are providing this outreach.

Expanded Dual Enrollment program for high school students:

In addition to these innovative programs, we are working closely with Southside Virginia Community College to expand our Dual Enrollment programs for high school students. Currently we have the Regional Governor's School, Associates Degrees in General Studies, and Career and Technical Education courses that include a variety of career pathways. Increased student involvement in these programs requires that we align our calendars with the community college. We are convinced that providing these opportunities to our students who are often economically disadvantaged will not only benefit them personally but will benefit our community. Our partnership with the community college is our lifeline to educating students who are prepared for the 21st century workforce.

Residency Program with Longwood University in a Master's in Special Education:

We are going to partner with Longwood University to provide a year-long residency program for teachers who are pursuing a Master's in Special Education. Longwood will place these teachers in our elementary and middle schools to support our special education population as well as our struggling readers. This opportunity is invaluable to our students who need the extra support. Furthermore, the teachers will be at our schools on a daily basis working under the supervision of Longwood University professors. We are very excited about the opportunity that will be afforded our school system and students through this program. Successful implementation will require that our school system aligns with the Longwood calendar.

Literacy Camp with Longwood University for at-risk students:

We are currently working with Longwood University to provide an on-campus literacy camp for at-risk students in grades 4-6. In order for this to work, we must conduct this camp in late May/early June to utilize their campus. This camp will provide these students with an opportunity to build a solid foundation in literacy, focus on career and college readiness, and expose students to cultural activities who would not otherwise have this type of experience.

We are very excited about all of these innovative programs and believe that they will empower our students to become lifelong learners and to be ready to contribute to the 21st century community.

Rationale for PROJECT-BASED LEARNING/CAREER DISCOVERY/DUAL ENROLLMENT/RESIDENCY PROGRAM FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION/SUMMER LITERACY CAMP

Mecklenburg County Public Schools (MCPS) is a rural school division located in south central Virginia. It consists of two high schools (grades 9-12)—Bluestone High School and Park View High School; two middle schools (grades 6-8) – Bluestone Middle School and Park View Middle School; and four elementary schools (grades PK – 5) -- Chase City Elementary School, Clarksville Elementary School, LaCrosse Elementary School, and South Hill Elementary School.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, Mecklenburg County has an overall population of 32,700 with a median household income of \$35,196. Of the total population age twenty-five and older, 25% have not attained a high school diploma and only 13.4% of that same population age group have earned a Bachelor's Degree or higher. Of those children under age 18 living in Mecklenburg County, 28.4% live in poverty. With a current ADM in the school division of 4,668 students in PK through twelfth grade, approximately 62% of the student population (2,894 students) receives free or reduced lunch.

Over the past several years MCPS has closely monitored the division's Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment results as they correlate to the State's implementation of more rigorous standards and assessments. Generally, SOL assessment results in MCPS have declined as standards have become more rigorous. Additionally, MCPS has also closely monitored the division's on-time graduation rates recognizing that ALL students must be successful on SOL assessments and graduate from high school on time in order to become successful in either post-secondary opportunities or in a chosen career. With these two key areas of concern—declining SOL assessment results with increased rigor in state standards and assessments and increasing on-time graduation rates from high school—MCPS created a committee composed of administrators and teachers to analyze and monitor various student, grade level and division level data related to overall student, school, and division academic success and to investigate and establish a plan of action with the ultimate goal of increasing instructional rigor and SOL assessment results, increasing the number of students graduating from high school on time and pursuing post-secondary education/opportunities, and effectively preparing all students to meet 21st Century workforce expectations. The following areas of concern were established by the committee:

- Mecklenburg County is categorized as a rural, distant county with nearly 20% of the total population living in poverty. Of the school-aged children (ages 5-17) residing in Mecklenburg County, 25.3% live in poverty. (2010 U.S. Census Bureau – Poverty and Median Income Estimates)
- Mecklenburg County's economy is based primarily on agriculture (tobacco) and manufacturing. For decades the success of the County's economy was sustained by the types of skills and training necessary to support jobs related to these primary sources of employment. As these types of jobs have diminished or been eliminated, MCPS recognizes that it must take the lead in providing opportunities for students to explore career options as well as develop the skills essential to meet the demands of a career-ready 21st century workforce.
- Most recently, the County's economy has been crippled by several factors: three major manufacturing plant closures--Burlington Industries, Russell Stover Candies and Sherwood Foods; the closing of the

Mecklenburg Correctional Center; and the declining tobacco industry. With the closure of just these three major industries and the Mecklenburg Correctional Center, approximately 4,000 jobs were lost in Mecklenburg County.

- Because economic development and job opportunities are very limited in Mecklenburg County, many parents and their children have very little exposure to varying career opportunities or to knowledge of the level of education required. Historically, the employment demands of agriculture and manufacturing within Mecklenburg County have been the impetus for pursuing a career locally. Current trends no longer support the level of demand for these employment choices in Mecklenburg County, and MCPS must commit to a plan of action to expose all students to varying career opportunities and to the relevance of post-secondary education. In order to meet this goal, a formal, structured program must be implemented to provide information and enrichment activities for all students specific to career awareness and post-secondary opportunities as it relates to developing the necessary 21st Century skills to compete in a global economy.
- While the dropout rate in MCPS of 1.67% (36 students) in 2009-2010 has been cut nearly in half to .86% (19 students) according to 2010-2011 data, the dropout rate continues to be a tremendous source of concern for MCPS. Additionally, the on-time graduation rate for MCPS of 87.9% in 2012 remains slightly below the 2012 statewide on-time graduation rate of 88%. A primary focus for MCPS must be to seek ways to continue to increase the number of students remaining in school and graduating on time so that ALL MCPS students earn a high school diploma.
- A review of the most recent SOL data for MCPS indicates that instruction and student achievement are not keeping pace with the State's increased rigor in the standards and assessments. On the elementary level, 2009-2010 SOL data results indicate that students in all grade levels scored above the state average in all subject areas except fifth grade science where students scored two points below the state average. By 2011-2012, SOL data results on the elementary level for MCPS indicate a decline below the state average in every subject area in third and fourth grades except third grade history. Fifth grade SOL data results for 2011-2012 continued to exceed the state average in every subject area except fifth grade writing where the scores remained even with the state average. Further analysis of the third, fourth, and fifth grade SOL data results from 2009-2010 to 2011-2012 reveal a significant decline in the percentage of students scoring advanced proficient. A decline in advanced proficient scores is noted in every subject area except fifth grade science and in Virginia Studies where there was a modest increase in the percentage of advanced proficient scores. Additionally, the percentage of advanced proficient scores in fifth grade reading remained at the same level from 2009 to 2011. Such overall decline in advanced proficient SOL results on the elementary level raises grave concerns about student achievement at the minimum level of learning expectancy. Upon further SOL data analysis of the MCPS middle school level (grades six, seven, and eight), there is a decline from 2009 to 2011 SOL test results in all subject areas across all grade levels when compared to the state average. Additionally, the percentage of advanced proficient scores declined significantly across the board in every subject area on the middle school level, particularly in sixth and eighth grade mathematics and in eighth grade writing. This same trend with regard to analysis of SOL test results is also revealed on the high school level in MCPS. In nearly every subject area on the high school level, student achievement declined in all subject areas when compared to the state average, and the percentage of students achieving advanced proficient scores also declined. This dramatic reversal of performance on SOL assessments must be addressed in order to increase student learning beyond basic content-specific knowledge and skills.
- Two significant concerns that became very clear to the Committee based on all of the information gathered were the overall decline in student achievement division-wide and the opportunities for career exposure and readiness. The challenge for MCPS is to develop effective programs and strategies to

address these concerns and incorporate as many resources as are available to improve teaching, learning experiences, student achievement and college and career readiness.

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING – PROGRAM GOALS

Mecklenburg County Public Schools started a pilot program for Project-Based Learning (PBL) in 2012-2013 with the sixth grade. Parents were informed and had the opportunity to enroll their students PBL or in the traditional classroom environment. At each middle school we had one hundred students in the PBL pilot program. At the end of the year, the success of program was evident through higher SOL scores, a decrease in discipline (40% reduction), and increased attendance. Both parents and students demanded that this program expand. This year PBL is offered at all eight schools in grades 5, 6, 7, 9 and dual enrollment classes. This innovative program offers an approach to teaching and learning with a much greater emphasis on student-centered learning. The basis for the curriculum of the PBL program is the Standards of Learning with teachers serving as facilitators for learning and students actively engaged in their own learning through individual and group exploration and problem-solving.

PBL offers diversity in learning for students. The classroom structure and culture is one of collaboration and mutual trust and respect. While learning essential content is absolutely critical in the PBL program, the very nature of the program lends itself to drawing from many disciplines to solve problems and promote learning as well as encouraging and supporting students to build critical 21st Century skills such as the use of technology, inquiry, research, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration.

The goal of the program is to shift instruction from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach and engage students in learning experiences that include inquiry, investigation, critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, research, and collaborative learning. Our goal is ultimately to prepare students for the 21st Century in college and career readiness, and to be productive, contributing members to their community. We also intend for this program to increase student achievement in the Standards of Learning.

MCPS initially partnered with Charlotte County Public Schools to design and implement our PBL program. As the success of this program has grown, MCPS plans to continue their PBL partnership with Charlotte County Public Schools and to initiate partnerships with other Region VIII school divisions (Cumberland and Nottoway) as well as with Longwood University (LU). The Region VIII partnership will provide opportunities to share resources for ongoing teacher training and professional development for successful implementation of PBL. Having our calendar's aligned to the colleges will ensure that we can continue to this collaborative support through professional development opportunities in the summer and school year.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Evaluation of PBL will rely mainly upon data collection and analysis of such things as student grades, SOL test results, other standardized assessments administered in MCPS, discipline data, attendance data, and student/parent survey data. Data analysis by a committee of administrators and teachers will use 2011-2012 assessment results as the baseline for determining program success from year to year. Another key component to the success of the PBL program will be data collection and analysis of teacher effectiveness in instructional planning, instructional delivery, and student growth through careful monitoring of teacher evaluation using our TEACH rubric. A structure of instructional rounds performed by the Instructional Leadership Team, Principals, and outside evaluators will determine the success of this program.

CAREER AND CHARACTER EDUCATION - PROGRAM GOALS

MCPS developed the Career Discovery program and Habits of Heart and Mind for all students in Pre-Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade to place an emphasis on providing information and enrichment activities for students and families to understand career options, career choices, career opportunities and character/habits that will enable students to be successful in life. Through this program, students will understand the relevance of setting career and character goals to their personal academic achievement. The ultimate goal is to better serve our student population by providing ongoing opportunities, guidance and direction to have 100% of our students successfully complete their high school graduation requirements within four years and adequately prepare for a successful career through post-secondary education or vocational and/or occupational training. By allowing our juniors and seniors in high school to serve as mentors and facilitators of this program, it allows for our elementary and middle school students to build relationships with students outside of the teacher/parent relationship and Furthermore, this will allow our high school students the opportunity to serve our community by helping our younger students understand the importance of setting career and character goals. Because our dual enrollment students operate on the same calendar as SVCC, it is important that our elementary and middle schools operate on this same schedule.

Beginning with Pre-Kindergarten students, the Career Discovery program has established a specific plan with activities designed to expose all students on each grade level to opportunities that focus on higher educational opportunities and career options. Among the activities planned through Career Discovery, younger elementary students will be involved in onsite visits to our local community college (Southside Virginia Community College) campuses where they will have an opportunity to tour the college facilities, providing critical exposure to academic, computer and electronic as well as vocational classrooms, labs, the college library and the college café. Students will also have an opportunity to meet and interview faculty members. Students in the upper elementary grade levels will have an opportunity to visit SVCC where they will participate in structured sessions designed to provide information relative to the Virginia Education Wizard, the Bridges to Success Program, cosmetology, health sciences and nursing, business administration, drafting, time management, teamwork, and extracurricular activities that stress the importance of physical activity and overall wellness. Through this structured program, upper elementary students will participate in sessions where SVCC faculty provide relevant information and answer any questions students may have. In addition to visiting and building a collaborative relationship with our local community college faculty, staff, and student body through the Career Discovery program, MCPS students will also participate in ongoing enrichment activities involving parents, local businesses, and community members who will share career information and educational requirements either through interviews or classroom presentations. Such exposure motivates students to consider the broad possibilities for career opportunities and to learn first-hand the connection between career choice and educational attainment.

All middle school students (grades six through eight) will also have an opportunity to broaden their knowledge of careers and post-secondary opportunities through the Career Discovery program and college campus tours. On-site tours of the local community college (Southside Virginia Community College) campuses as well as Longwood University and Virginia State University will provide a more in-depth exposure to career opportunities, educational relevance to specific career choices, and the overall culture of campus life. In addition to students visiting a variety of classrooms, labs and the campus library, they will also tour the athletic facilities, the student union facility, the dining hall, and other areas of specific interest to each college campus. While these activities offer invaluable experiences and opportunities for middle school students, they will also

be involved with ongoing enrichment activities upon their return to school utilizing the knowledge and support of parents and community resources to complement and reinforce the importance of career choice and educational attainment.

In order for all Career Discovery activities and tours to be meaningful for all students, teachers and their mentors will correlate activities in lesson plans prior to the planned activity to connect to the classroom/community/campus activities as they are structured throughout the school year.

In order to track structured activities as they are aligned to academic standards and curriculum expectations, a Career Discovery Student Record/Tracking card for each student will be completed annually by the student's teacher and/or school guidance counselor and maintained in the student's cumulative folder for students in PK through twelfth grade. The information provided on the Student Record/Tracking card will serve as a means to document successful implementation of the program and will also be used as a tool to guide career planning discussions with each student.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The Career Discovery /Character Education will be evaluated using the following methods:

- MCPS will use data through the Student Record Collection process through the Department of Education, including the On-time Graduation Rate, AYP Graduation Data, and the CTE Annual Performance Report.
- Guidance records and information available through the MCPS Student Information System (SIS) for the 2011-2012 school year will be used as a baseline for evaluation. The data for 2011-2012 are as follows:

Students attending 4-year colleges/universities	31%
Students attending 2-year colleges	39%
Students joining the military	8%
Students seeking employment	22%
Undecided	.3%
Obtained Advanced Studies Diploma	45%
Obtained Standard Diploma	42%
Obtained Modified Standard Diploma	10%
Obtained Special Diploma	2%
Obtained GED	1%
Obtained Certificate of Completion	.3%

A Career Discovery Student Record/Tracking card in each student's cumulative folder will provide information on the extent of participation and specific interests generated. School personnel (administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors) will review and assist with student career planning with students and parents. Career Discovery will enhance and supplement the development of Academic and Career Plans as specified in § VAC 20-131-140. In addition MCPS will be tracking discipline and attendance data as well as student/parent surveys to measure student growth in character education.

EXPANDED DUAL ENROLLMENT - PROGRAM GOALS:

In addition we have increased the opportunity for students to further their education in the dual enrollment programs to include courses that will lead to either an Associate's Degree or certification:

- Regional Governor's School
- General Studies with an option to transfer to a 4 year college
- Pre-Engineering with an option to transfer to a 4 year college
- High Performance Manufacturing Technology Program with degree concentrations in electricity, Air Conditioning and Heating, Industrial Technology
- Certificates in Computer & Office Basics, Culinary Arts, Nurse's Aide, and Agribusiness

Our dual enrollment program requires that our students operate on Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC) calendar. SVCC is a tremendous resource for the students and families of MCPS. SVCC's John H. Daniel Campus in Keysville, Christanna Campus in Alberta, and Advanced Knowledge Learning Center in South Hill provide numerous programs, activities, and opportunities that students and their families would not otherwise have available to them. MCPS has a very successful dual enrollment program through SVCC with 45% of the 2012 graduating class obtaining an Advanced Studies Diploma.

The dual enrollment program offered through SVCC is a tremendous cost savings to our students and to MCPS. Dual enrollment courses (up to 6-8 credit hours per semester) are offered free of charge to students upon successful completion of the coursework. Should students wish to enroll and obtain additional credits, they may do so at a reduced tuition rate. These opportunities allow students to further their post-secondary education and earn college credits at a substantial savings. Currently there are 382 students at Bluestone High School and 446 students at Park View High School enrolled in a dual enrollment class through SVCC. This represents 60% of the student population at Bluestone High School and 57% of the student population at Park View High School.

Because teacher recruitment is often difficult when attempting to find highly qualified teachers with the level of education required to teach dual enrollment courses, SVCC often provides the necessary teaching staff to alleviate this staffing deficiency. This is a tremendous resource, both instructionally and financially, in providing a highly-qualified teacher needed to provide optimal academic opportunities to MCPS students. This program requires that our students operate on the community college calendar.

RESIDENCY PROGRAM FOR MASTER'S IN SPECIAL EDUCATION WITH LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY – PROGRAM GOALS:

Longwood University has partnered with Mecklenburg County Public Schools to offer a residency program for teachers obtaining their Master's in Special Education. This program would assign teachers to our elementary schools starting in August and continue for the entire school year. The resident teachers and their professors would be assigned to small groups of students to work with throughout the year doing behavioral assessments, teaching students, and providing ongoing professional development to our current special education teachers. Currently, many of special education teachers are on a provisional license and are in need of ongoing professional development. This program is an excellent opportunity for our students and teachers to benefit from the support of Longwood University. In order for this program to be effective, we need to operate on the same schedule as Longwood.

SUMMER LITERACY CAMP FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS GRADES 4-6 – PROGRAM GOALS:

Another program that requires a partnership with Longwood University is an on-campus Summer Literacy Camp for our at-risk population in grades 4-6. As we seek to find ways for students to graduate on-time, it is proven that literacy in the early grades is the key to successful completion of high school. This program will target those students who are reading below grade level to offer intensive literacy intervention. This program will afford these students the support not only in literacy, but in college and career readiness as well as cultural exposure. This population of students will have the opportunity to reside in a collegial atmosphere with the support of professors, teachers, and college students to facilitate opportunities for literacy development and growth.

In order to utilize the Longwood Campus, we must offer this program in late May, early June to work around Longwood campus housing schedule.

OTHER PROGRAMS:

Throughout the school year, SVCC as well as other universities—Longwood University, Liberty University, Old Dominion University—partner with MCPS and request placement of prospective teachers to complete a required practicum and/or student teaching experience in all MCPS schools. Because recruitment and retention of highly-qualified teachers is often challenging in MCPS, such partnerships are invaluable to MCPS because student teachers from these universities often return to MCPS to teach after than have completed their degree and licensure requirements.

In an effort to increase the potential for greater opportunities as well as a higher level of academic success for all MCPS students, the school division continues to build strong partnerships within the community, region, and with our local institutions of higher education. As these partnerships broaden, MCPS recognizes the importance of maximizing every instructional, financial, and human resource opportunity. These opportunities can best be maximized when there is an alignment in academic calendars between MCPS and those colleges and universities who are providing tremendous resources and support. When sharing faculty and staff and coordinating Governor's School and dual enrollment schedules and coursework, having an academic calendar aligned with SVCC and most of the other Region VIII school divisions where school opens in mid-August alleviates a mismatch of instructional schedules which would provide greater efficiency and effectiveness in maximizing instructional time, eliminate a lag in beginning instruction for dual enrollment courses offered at MCPS, and offer an opportunity to coordinate similar timeframes for holidays and breaks. Additionally, as MCPS provides prospective teachers from SVCC, Longwood University, Liberty University, and Old Dominion University an opportunity to fulfill practicum and student teaching requirements in all schools throughout MCPS, time is of the essence as these requirements demand specific timeframes. Having the MCPS calendar aligned with these colleges and universities where school begins in mid-August, would provide a better opportunity for planning practicum and student teaching experiences where everyone is on the same academic calendar and would alleviate the strain on MCPS teachers and prospective teachers to complete all requirements especially during the fall semester.

Due to the current economic crisis on the local, regional, state and federal levels, MCPS faces extraordinarily challenging budget decisions. Historically, the Mecklenburg County Board of Supervisors barely funds the minimum requirement for the school division, and MCPS anticipates that this will remain unchanged for the 2013-2014 school year and beyond. With level funding from the Board of Supervisors and the initiatives to provide optimal learning opportunities for the students of MCPS utilizing resources outside of the school division, it is crucial to align the school division's academic calendar with other Region VIII school divisions as

well as SVCC and Longwood University beginning the school year prior to Labor Day. This would allow greater flexibility in scheduling courses, programs, training, and in planning with surrounding school divisions and with SVCC and LU where classes begin in mid-August. With academic calendars aligned and all teachers and students on a similar school schedule within the region, costs for professional development, teacher training and student activities could be shared among the Region VIII school divisions providing a significant savings that could be utilized in other critical areas within the MCPS budget.

Increasing transportation costs are a major school division expenditure which must be managed as effectively and efficiently as possible. Because of the geographical size and the funding limitations and challenges in Mecklenburg County, it is imperative that all students (Pre-K-12) adhere to the same school calendar.

DOES THE PROGRAM REQUIRE THE SCHOOL OR SCHOOLS REFERENCED IN THIS APPLICATION TO OPEN PRIOR TO LABOR DAY?

YES NO.

IF YES, EXPLAIN WHY.

As with any new initiative, teacher training and professional development are critical components to the ongoing success of the PBL program. MCPS and Charlotte County Public Schools have partnered in sharing in the process of teacher training and collaboration to successfully implement the program. For the 2013-2014 school year, MCPS plans to expand the program into other grade levels. Additionally, Cumberland County Public Schools as well as Nottoway County Public Schools plan to implement PBL in their school divisions in 2013-2014 which will broaden the opportunities for sharing regional teacher training and program development. Both MCPS and Charlotte County Public Schools have jointly offered training for teachers and administrators and intend to continue their partnership to work jointly to provide ongoing PBL training to other Region VIII school divisions. When planning, training, and offering professional development opportunities, timing is a critical factor. Having school divisions on the same academic schedule provides a greater opportunity in creating effective, timely, and cost-effective training for all stakeholders. All training, comparison of program progress, and data point information would be based on the same timeframes without a lag from one school division to the next. With a majority of the school divisions in Region VIII on a pre-Labor Day academic schedule (currently every school division in Region VIII except Mecklenburg County, Brunswick County and Greenville County), it is imperative—especially for those school divisions who are moving forward with implementation of PBL—to align school division calendars for successful planning, training, and sharing of resources in order to effectively and efficiently implement PBL for the benefit of increased student learning and achievement.

The Career Discovery/Character Education program supplements the Standards of Accreditation requirement (§ 8 VAC 20-131-140) for development of a personal Academic and Career Plan which formally begins with all 7th graders. The Career Discovery Student Record/Tracking card provides the necessary information on each student beginning in PK to establish a clear plan for career planning for ALL grade levels, facilitating the formulation of the formal plan by 7th grade. Through early exposure to career options and educational opportunities, students and their families begin to recognize the value of education and begin to plan for success in school and in life as well as develop the habits and character traits necessary to become a successful, contributing adult.

Because our high school students who are involved in the dual enrollment program will be mentoring and facilitating this program with their adopted classroom at the elementary and middle school, it is important that maximize their time through operating on the same calendar schedule.

In addition the partnership with SVCC to implement Career Discovery/Character Education for MCPS students across all grade levels, it is essential to align the academic calendars to take full advantage of every available resource and opportunity. When the MCPS division academic calendar is not in sync with the SVCC academic calendar where the fall semester begins at least two weeks prior to Labor Day, valuable time is lost because MCPS schools are not open and students are not able to take advantage of programs and activities that are offered through the community college during that window of time.

Of utmost consideration in this request is the fact that in order to take advantage of every available resource for MCPS to meet the goals of increasing instructional rigor and SOL assessment results, increasing the number of students graduating from high school on time and pursuing post-secondary education/opportunities, and effectively preparing all students to meet 21st Century workforce expectations, MCPS respectfully request the opportunity to work within the guidelines and timeframes of its partners who all currently open school prior to Labor Day. Without this flexibility in timing for MCPS, valuable resources for our teachers and students will be lost and optimal program integration with our partners will not be possible. Through partnerships with other Region VIII school divisions, Southside Virginia Community College, and Longwood University, everyone moves forward to meet established goals and responsibilities in successfully teaching and educating children.

The table on the next page outlines and summarizes the importance of aligning calendars with other regional schools, colleges, and universities; presents the difficulties or impossibilities of implementing this plan without strting after Labor Day; and highlights the benefits to students. The table also provides a graphical depiction of the huge calendar alignment that occurs between colleges and universities when starting after Labor Day.

Program Goals	Pre-Labor Day Calendar	Post-Labor Day Calendar	Schools Affected	Benefits for Students
Professional Development provided by local colleges during the summer to ensure highly qualified teachers	✓ Teachers out of school in time to sign up for summer college sessions	✗ Teachers still in school when summer classes start	All Schools	Improves classroom instruction; ensures every student has a highly-qualified teacher
Shared Regional In-Service sessions providing quality professional development for minimal costs	✓ All but 2 schools in Region VIII start before Labor Day. Allowing shared Professional Development.	? Limited availability to share professional development due to days not aligned	All Schools	Improves classroom instruction; ensures every student has a highly-qualified teacher Sharing training costs allows more opportunities for improving teacher quality which increases student achievement
Longwood Partnership Residency Program for Master's in Special Education	✓ Longwood students could start in classrooms immediately	✗ Master's students would miss a month of school as well as time at the end of school.	Elementary Schools	Students benefit from having more educators available to help in the classroom. Professional development offered to current teachers by professors and Master's students. Mecklenburg County can recruit Longwood Students to teach in our county which helps reducing our shortage of highly qualified teachers.
Placement of student teachers and practicums for regional colleges and universities (Longwood, ODU, Mary Baldwin, etc)	✓ Longwood students could start in classrooms immediately	✗ Students would miss a month of school as well as time at the end of school. ✗ Sometimes makes it ineffective to accommodate student teachers due to a different calendar.	All Schools	Students benefit from having more educators available to help in the classroom. Mecklenburg County can recruit Longwood Students to teach in our county which helps reducing our shortage of highly qualified teachers.

<p>Dual Enrollment: High Performance Manufacturing Pre-Engineering Regional Governor's School Computer & Office Culinary Nurse's Aide Agribusiness Genera Studies transfer</p>	<p>✓ Mirroring SVCC's calendar facilitates this program so that students operate on the same schedule for their high school classes.</p>	<p>✗ Students must operate on two different calendars. This also requires extra transportation.</p>	<p>High Schools</p>	<p>Facilitates attainment of post-secondary degrees, industry certifications, and career readiness skills.</p> <p>Offers a monetary benefit to economically disadvantaged students.</p> <p>Allows students to gain career opportunities in STEM</p>
<p>Career & Character Education Program</p>	<p>✓ Dual Enrollment students through SVCC will start mentoring Elementary/Middle Students at the beginning of school in August.</p>	<p>✗ Dual Enrollment students would not be able to start mentoring project with pre-K- 8 students until a month later.</p>	<p>All Schools</p>	<p>Offers opportunities for students to explore careers and character education at an early age.</p> <p>Allows high school students an opportunity to contribute to the well-being of younger students.</p> <p>Develops a sense of community</p>
<p>Literacy Camp</p>	<p>✓ Students will be able to utilize on campus housing at Longwood University for Literacy Camp because it is available.</p>	<p>✗ Longwood University onsite housing would not be available</p>	<p>Elementary and Middle Schools</p>	<p>Focuses on our students who are at-risk for not graduating on-time at an early age.</p> <p>Gives students an opportunity to increase their literacy skills, explore career and college, and engage in cultural activities</p>

IF THE PROGRAM IS EXPERIMENTAL, FOR THE SCHOOL OR SCHOOLS REFERENCED IN THIS APPLICATION INCLUDE INFORMATION THAT EXPLAINS WHY THERE IS REASON TO EXPECT THAT THE PROGRAM WILL BE SUCCESSFUL.

N/A

DESCRIBE THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAM FOR EACH SCHOOL.

Anticipated outcomes for each school include the following:

Mecklenburg County Elementary Schools:

1. Increased opportunities for students to be aware of careers and participate in career readiness activities.
2. Increased opportunities for teachers to participate in division and regional professional development.
3. Increased student engagement due to student-centered learning through Project-Based Learning.
4. Increased student attendance and a decrease in student discipline due to student engagement.
5. Improved AMO gap group data.
6. Improved scores on Standards of Learning.
7. Increased participation through Longwood's Master's in Special Education Residency Program and student-teacher programs which provides an increase in support for Mecklenburg County students.
8. Increased development in student's literacy skills, and consequently a reduction in future drop-out rate.

Mecklenburg County Middle Schools:

1. Increased opportunities for students to be aware of careers and participate in career readiness activities.
2. Completion of an initial Academic and Career Plan for all students.
3. Increased opportunities for teachers to participate in division and regional professional development.
4. Increased student engagement due to student-centered learning through Project-Based Learning.
5. Increased student attendance and a decrease in student discipline due to student engagement.
6. Improved AMO gap group data.
7. Improved scores on Standards of Learning.
8. Increased participation in Longwood's student teacher/practicum program offering recruitment of highly qualified teachers and better support for our students.
9. Increased development in student's literacy skills, and consequently a reduction in future drop-out rate.

Mecklenburg County High Schools:

1. Increased opportunities for students to be aware of careers and participate in career readiness activities.
2. Completion of an initial Academic and Career Plan for all students.
3. Increased opportunities for teachers to participate in division and regional professional development.
4. Increased student engagement due to student-centered learning through Project-Based Learning.
5. Increased student attendance and a decrease in student discipline due to student engagement.
6. Improved AMO gap group data.
7. Improved scores on Standards of Learning.
8. Increased participation in Longwood's student teacher/practicum program offering recruitment of highly qualified teachers and better support for our students.
9. Increased number of students attending institutions of higher learning.

10. Increased number of students receiving Associate's Degrees upon graduation from high school.
11. Increased number of students receiving industry certifications.

The anticipated outcome of all programs for each school is multi-faceted. In order to maximize opportunities for teachers and students in MCPS, it is imperative to build a foundation of collaborative partnerships with all levels of the educational spectrum within the area to provide a mutual exchange of ideas, methods, resources, and training. Working through a collaborative partnership will provide opportunities that will far surpass what MCPS would be able to accomplish without such support. In order for the partnership to maximize every available academic, economic, and human resource opportunity, it is critical for planning, training, and implementation purposes of all programs in all schools to operate on a school year calendar that coincides with all educational facilities involved where schools open prior to Labor Day. While this opportunity and exposure are tremendous assets for our teachers and educational staff within the school division, ultimately, it is the outcome for the student that is of greatest importance. The ultimate goal is that all MCPS students will have the benefit of acquiring an outstanding quality education as they prepare for life through post-secondary opportunities and/or the career choice of their future in the 21st century.

SCHOOL DIVISION	Mecklenburg County Public Schools
TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY	Project-Based Learning (PBL), Career Discovery/Character Education, Residency Program for Master's program in Special Education through Longwood, On Campus Literacy Program

IF YOU ARE SEEKING A WAIVER OF A PROVISION OR PROVISIONS OF THE ACCREDITING STANDARDS, STATE THE PROVISION AND THE RATIONALE FOR SEEKING A WAIVER FOR EACH.

N/A

DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WAIVER/PROGRAM/ACTIVITY. (Include information that includes measurable goals, objectives, and student academic achievement that will be expected as a result of the implementation of the program/activity.)

Please see Program Goals and Evaluation Procedures for each program described in the first section.

Number of students involved in the program	4,668
What is the anticipated length of the program or duration of the waiver?	Ongoing

Questions should be directed to the Division of Policy and Communications at (804) 225-2092, or by e-mail to policydata@doe.virginia.gov. This application and supporting documentation must be sent to:

Division of Policy and Communications
Department of Education
P. O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120