

Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: E

Date: February 27, 2014

Title	Final Review of Request for Approval of an Innovative Program Opening Prior to Labor Day from Cumberland County Public Schools		
Presenter	Ms. Anne D. Wescott, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications Dr. Amy Griffin, Superintendent, Cumberland 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. Cumberland County Public Schools (CuCPS) has had a weather-related waiver for many years.

However, some of the school divisions that have a weather-related waiver, including Cumberland 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:

The Cumberland County School Board is requesting a pre-Labor Day waiver to implement an innovative program entitled CuCPS Project 21 for Cumberland High School, Cumberland Middle School, and Cumberland Elementary School. The program includes implementation of 21st Century learning skills, application of Project Based Learning in the classroom, and promotion of career readiness for all students. The program is designed so that the school division can work in collaboration with other Region VIII schools which have these goals, as well as with Longwood University.

The waiver request indicates that starting before Labor Day would mirror the schedules of most Region VIII schools and of most colleges and universities (including Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC), J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, Liberty University, Longwood University, Norfolk State University, and Virginia State University. All of these colleges and universities start summer school in late May. Alignment of the calendars would facilitate participation in regional professional development activities, allow students to take summer college classes, increase the opportunities available to students, and enable teachers to take advantage of summer workshops and courses.

All three Cumberland schools also take advantage of student teachers and practicum students from Longwood University, and the Longwood Partnership students actually hold classes at Cumberland Elementary School for half of the day. These student teacher cooperative and practicum experiences are facilitated by a schedule that aligns with Longwood’s schedule.

The school division also included in its request a discussion of professional development and dual enrollment and other programs at the high school level. The request noted that the school division is often unable to accommodate student teachers due to calendar misalignment, school division teachers are unable to attend professional development provided by colleges during the summer, and it is difficult to share regional professional development when many of the other school divisions have pre-Labor Day openings.

Elementary School (Cumberland Elementary School)

This school division is requesting a pre-Labor Day waiver to ensure the ability to collaborate with other school divisions in the region in professional development and sharing of resources. The school division participates in professional development through the Region VIII Educational Center and the Longwood Institute, which serves over 20 school divisions in Virginia. This program has three basic components: 1) the implementation of 21st Century learning skills, 2) the application of research-based learning strategies, such as Project Based Learning, in the classroom, and 3) the promotion of career readiness for all students. CuCPS notes that this initiative requires vertical alignment of the curriculum, which requires all schools have similar schedules for professional development collaborative time.

The elementary school also takes advantage of student teachers and practicum students from Longwood University, and the Longwood Partnership Program for teacher preparation. In this collaborative program, the Longwood University students attend class at Cumberland Elementary School in the

morning and observe the CuCPS students and teachers in the classroom in the afternoon. The partnership program provides hands-on learning beginning on the first day of classes for both Longwood and CuCPS. For school year 2014-2015, Longwood University begins classes on August 25, and the day after Labor Day is September 2, the following week.

Middle School (Cumberland Middle School)

Cumberland Middle School also participates in the Longwood Partnership Program for teacher preparation, and its teachers also participate in the regional professional development.

High School (Cumberland High School)

Cumberland High School students participate in the Governor’s School of Southside Virginia and the Superintendents’ Region 8 Governor’s Health Sciences Academy that will begin in 2014-2015. Section 22.1-26 (D) of the *Code of Virginia* 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.” As participating school divisions have pre-Labor Day waivers, for the 2013-2014 school year, the Governor’s School of Southside Virginia began on August 15.

In addition, CuCPS works closely with Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC) in offering dual enrollment courses to its students in ten different content areas, including courses offered at the high school, at Southside Virginia Community College’s Governor’s School, and at SVCC’s Pre-Engineering Program. CuCPS reports it has 36 students enrolled in dual enrollment (DE) math courses, 63 students in DE science courses, 108 students in DE history courses, 52 in DE English courses, 98 students in DE Career and Technical courses, and 79 in other dual enrollment elective courses. Sixteen students attending Governor’s School at SVCC are expected to graduate from high school with associate degrees, upon successful completion of the program.

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 Cumberland 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 Cumberland 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 school 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 Cumberland County Public Schools

TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY CuCPS Project 21

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 Cumberland Elementary School, Cumberland Middle School, and Cumberland High School

Date Approved
by the Local School Board

Signature
Chairman of the School Board

Submission Date

Signature
Division Superintendent

SCHOOL DIVISION Cumberland County Public Schools

TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY CuCPS Project 21

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 Cumberland County School Board is requesting a pre-Labor Day Waiver for implementation of an innovative program entitled CuCPS Project 21 for Cumberland High School, Cumberland Middle School, and Cumberland Elementary School. The program has three basic components: 1) The implementation of 21st Century learning skills, 2) The application of research-based learning strategies, such as Project Based Learning, in the classroom, and 3) The promotion of Career Readiness for all students. The program is designed so that CuCPS can work in collaboration with other Region 8 schools which have similar goals (including Mecklenburg and Nottoway), as well as with nearby colleges and universities (especially Longwood University), which will provide part of the professional development. The Southside Virginia "NCLB" Office is currently developing a Region VIII Professional Development Plan, but is hampered by the varying schedules of Region VIII schools. The Longwood Institute, serving over 20 school divisions in Virginia, also finds it difficult to offer professional development opportunities that allow all school divisions to participate. Once school calendars are aligned, a schedule of shared professional development opportunities can be developed. Region VIII schools are also participating in several grants that will provide professional development to staff members, which would be facilitated by calendar alignment. Tentative plans, which **require** pre-Labor Day opening to be implemented, include a collaborative with Cumberland, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, and Longwood University for the following professional development:

Professional Development	Proposed Dates
21 st Century Learning Seminar	May 2014
Longwood Leadership Forum	May/June 2014
Research-based Learning Strategies	June 2014 (early in month)
Unpacking SOL Standards	July 2014 (early in month)
New Teacher Institute	July 2014 (end of month)

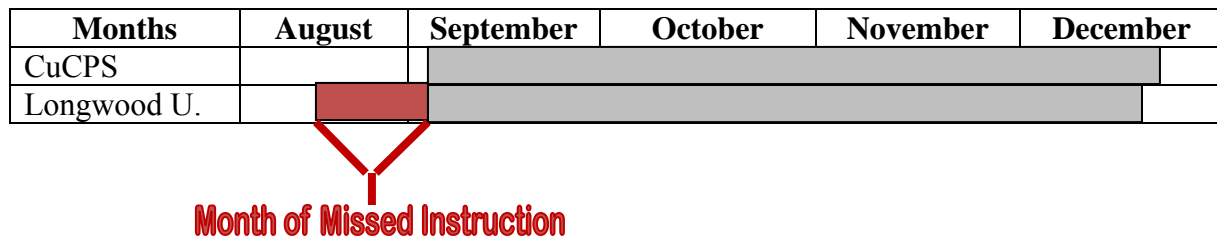
Granting approval of this request would allow all three of the schools in the division to open prior to Labor Day. Currently, all three schools share professional development opportunities offered by the division. Schools also share staff members; currently, several teachers and/or paraprofessionals are shared by two or more schools. The division has previously shared teachers regionally, such as the school psychologist, and would like to increase the number of shared human resources in the future, which will not be possible unless all schools involved operate on the same calendar.

In addition, starting before Labor Day would mirror the schedules of most Region VIII schools and of most colleges and universities (including Southside Virginia Community College, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, Liberty University, Longwood University, Norfolk State University, and Virginia State University—which all start summer school in late May), which would, in turn, facilitate participation in regional professional

development activities, allow students to take summer college classes, increase the opportunities available to students, and enable teachers to take advantage of summer workshops and courses. Aligning calendars with colleges permits high school students to participate in Dual Enrollment courses as well as the Pre-Engineering Program at SVCC. At the present time, Cumberland provides transportation for several other school divisions to the Governor’s School and the Pre-Engineering programs, including Buckingham and Prince Edward. This would not be possible if schools were on drastically different schedules. All three Cumberland schools also take advantage of student teachers and practicum students from Longwood University, and the Longwood Partnership students actually hold classes at Cumberland Elementary School for half of the day. These student teacher cooperative and practicum experiences are facilitated by a schedule that aligns with Longwood’s schedule. In addition, Cumberland now participates in a collaborative project with Longwood University for a Partnership School. This project also involves other counties, such as Charlotte and Nottoway. These Longwood Partnership students observe, assist, and student teach primarily in **Cumberland Elementary** and **Cumberland Middle School**, providing valuable learning experiences for both the Longwood students and the Cumberland students. Matching calendars would allow the Longwood Partnership students to receive the same training that is provided to Cumberland teachers. **Starting after Labor Day would eliminate almost a month of time at the beginning of the year that Longwood practicum students and student teachers would be available to work with students.**

The Longwood Partnership is a unique, year-long experience. The first half of the school year, Longwood students participate in the practicum experience, involving placement at both the elementary and the middle school level. The second half of the year, they participate in student teaching. For the first semester, Longwood students not only take Longwood classes on the CuCPS campus, but they also join the Cumberland teachers for professional development which prepares them for CuCPS education initiatives, such as 21st Century learning and PBL. **In order to provide this joint comprehensive professional development, the calendars of both CuCPS and Longwood must be aligned.**

The figure below depicts the loss of learning opportunities if CuCPS is forced to start after Labor Day. Longwood practicum students begin holding their education classes at CuCPS and enter the elementary and middle school classrooms on their second day, which is typically around mid-August. If CuCPS does not start until after Labor Day, the Longwood students will miss almost a month of classroom experience. Moreover, the CuCPS students will not be able to take advantage of having another educator available in the classroom.



The division now partners with Southside Virginia Community College and surrounding counties to institute the regional Governor’s Health Science Academy, which also requires that the division calendar be aligned with SVCC’s calendar. Many of the partner school divisions open prior to Labor Day, and in order to participate, Cumberland would need to have a similar calendar. Cumberland students also attend the welding apprenticeship program at SVCC, which results in a certification for participating students leading to high-demand, high-wage jobs. Both of these programs are aligned with Cumberland’s career focus and would be facilitated by a change in the calendar.

Rationale for CUCPS Project 21:

Cumberland County Public Schools (CuCPS), located in the heart of Virginia, is a small, rural school division with only three schools—Cumberland High School (grades 9-12), Cumberland Middle School (grades 5-8), and Cumberland Elementary School (grades preK-4). The total school enrollment for preK through grade 12 is 1,433. Of this total, 65% are eligible to receive free or reduced price lunch.

As part of a division-wide initiative, the 21st Century Steering Committee, composed of educators across the division, formed a focus group to implement CuCPS Project 21. The division recognizes the importance of teaching students 21st Century learning skills so that they can be college and workplace ready. A major emphasis of the initiative was to increase the number of students who attend institutions of higher learning and pursue postsecondary education. The group identified the following as concerns:

- Cumberland County is a poor county with limited financial resources; the poverty statistics for Cumberland indicate that 15.2% of citizens in the County are living below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In the age 0-17 age group, 26% live in poverty (Kids Count, 2010).
- According to the report by the Virginia Employment Commission (2012), for 2011 Cumberland County had an unemployment rate of 7.1%; the unemployment rate for October 2012 was 6.2% (Virginia Economic Development Partnership, 2012).
- Economic development is extremely limited, the tax base is extremely low, and it is difficult to support community recreational activities, medical services, or transportation. The two largest employers in the county are the school division and county government (Virginia Employment Commission, 2012). The school division has implemented many programs to support the community, including summer feeding programs, the Helping Hand Mentor program, enrichment and remedial after-school programs, summer gifted programs, adult education programs, and emergency shelters.
- Cumberland County youth and their families often lack personal and community exposure to varying career opportunities and exposure to the college environment, and lack the knowledge as to what kind of education is required to be successful in these careers. Of the total county population, only 14.1% of those over the age of 25 have attained a Bachelor's degree or higher while 23.4% do not possess a high school diploma (U.S. Census Bureau, *Cumberland County Quick Facts*, 2011).
- Very few job opportunities exist in Cumberland County. Currently, Cumberland has 7,495 residents over the age of 19; of this number, 3,556 commute outside the county for work (U.S. Census, 2010).
- As a rural county, agricultural jobs are still an important employment industry for Cumberland (Virginia Employment Commission, 2012); however, according to Bureau of Labor (2010) statistics, the overall employment in agriculture-related fields is expected to decrease by 4% by 2020. There has also been a decrease in the number of jobs available in construction and manufacturing, making it difficult for students to pursue jobs locally. Current trends no longer support the traditional career choices for CuCPS students and they must be prepared for a broader market. Many of the fastest growing occupations include biomedical engineers, veterinary technologists and technicians, diagnostic medical sonographers, occupational therapy assistants, interpreters and translators, registered nurses, and postsecondary and elementary school teachers; however, these jobs require postsecondary education (Bureau of Labor, 2010).

In 2013 Cumberland High School reported 50% of its graduating class as having earned college preparatory advanced diplomas, 43% earned standard high school diplomas, 1% earned modified standard diplomas, and 2% earned special education diplomas. One student from the 2013 cohort earned his GED and 17 graduated from Cumberland High School in 2013 having earned an Associate's Degree from Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC). Cumberland County Public Schools works closely with SVCC in offering Governor's School Humanities and Pre-Engineering programs to students as well as 28 dual enrollment courses offered either at the SVCC site or on the Cumberland High School campus. Cumberland County Public Schools

is committed to continuing to work with SVCC and other outside organizations to increase the number of college credit earning students and Associate's degree graduates.

Cumberland High School's Dual Enrollment program is comprised of ten different content areas including courses offered at the high school, at Southside Virginia Community College's Governor's School, and at SVCC's Pre-Engineering Program. Cumberland County currently has 16 students (9 Juniors and 7 Seniors) attending Governor's School at SVCC, all of which will graduate high school with Associate's Degrees upon successful completion of the program. Currently offered at SVCC or on campus are 7 dual enrollment content areas offered within 28 courses. Cumberland currently has 36 students enrolled in dual enrollment math courses, 63 students in DE science courses, 108 students in DE history courses, 52 in DE English courses, 98 students in DE Career and Technical courses, and 79 in other dual enrollment elective courses.

The benefits of Dual Enrollment courses are many:

- Students receive both high school and college credits.
- Students experience the academic rigors of a college level course.
- Time required to complete a college degree is dramatically shortened.
- College credits may be transferred to numerous four-year colleges and universities in Virginia.
- The successful completion of Dual Enrollment courses may help students be accepted into colleges.

To increase the dual enrollment opportunities requires that schools in the division have a calendar similar to SVCC, which starts classes prior to Labor Day.

However, equipping students with 21st Century skills necessary to be successful in postsecondary education as well as on the job will require that teachers be trained in using techniques such as project based learning, Marzano strategies, and student-led instruction. Schools in Region VIII are collaborating and cooperating to offer regional professional development opportunities, including a 21st Century Learning Seminar, a Leadership Forum, a Project Based Learning Workshop, and a New Teacher Institute—which would require that all calendars be uniform. Divisions are also encouraging teachers at all grade levels/schools to take college courses in the summer, which also requires that schools operate on calendars similar to those of colleges. The following chart shows the local college opening dates:

College/University	Summer Date	Fall Date	Spring Date
Longwood University	May 19, 2014	August 21, 2014	January 12, 2015
Hampden-Sydney College	May 20, 2014	August 23, 2014	January 14, 2015
Southside VA Community C.	May 19, 2014	August 14, 2014*	January 7, 2015*
Norfolk State University	May 19, 2014	August 14, 2014*	January 12, 2015*
Liberty University	May 12, 2014	August 18, 2014	January 12, 2015
J. Sargeant Reynolds C. C.	May 19, 2014	August 20, 2014	January 5, 2015*
Virginia Union University	May 13, 2014	August 15, 2014*	January 9, 2015*
Virginia State University	May 20, 2014	August 20, 2014*	January 9, 2015*

*--tentative date based on last year's academic calendar

Program Goals and Objectives

Because preparation for postsecondary education is so important, Cumberland County Public Schools has developed Project 21. The focus of the initiative is three-pronged. The first objective is the implementation of 21st Century learning skills. All three schools are focusing on 21st Century learning skills so that students can be successful on the job, in the military, or in postsecondary education. Goals of this objective include providing

professional development for all teachers, conducting observations to see 21st Century learning skills in action, and developing lesson plans that reflect 21st Century learning activities. The second objective is to provide a system for the application of research-based learning strategies, such as research-based learning activities, in the classroom. Goals for this objective include professional development for all teachers, providing opportunities to collaborate with teachers outside the division, and the development of lesson plans that incorporate these research-based learning strategies. This requires **vertical alignment** of the curriculum, which can only be done if all three schools have similar schedules for professional development collaborative time. The third objective is the promotion of Career Readiness for all students. All students should be provided with opportunities to explore careers and to map out a career plan. One of the goals of this objective is to increase the number of students enrolling in postsecondary education. Other goals of this objective include providing opportunities for students to get career certificates (such as Career Readiness Certificate, Microsoft Office User Specialist, etc.) and to take the Workplace Readiness test, implementing a Career Discovery Program, and recognizing student career achievements. Given a community culture that has not historically reinforced the relevance of postsecondary education, it is imperative that the school division expose all students, especially at the **elementary** and **middle** school level, to the college environment. Cumberland must fill this void by providing a formal, structured program such as Project 21.

In order to address the needs of Cumberland students, the Cumberland School Board is requesting a waiver to start school prior to Labor Day. The purpose of this submission is to be able to collaborate with surrounding school divisions in Region VIII as well as with local community colleges and four-year colleges/universities in the implementation of the goals of CuCPS Project 21.

These goals are consistent with the comprehensive reform vision of the Rural Route to Postsecondary Education (RRPE) Consortium, which is comprised of ten school divisions located in rural Southside Virginia including Cumberland (lead LEA), Amelia, Appomattox, Buckingham, Charlotte, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway and Prince Edward. The goals of the RRPE include a focus on promoting college and career readiness, providing highly qualified and effective educators, and developing sound policies for student success that provide expanded opportunities for students.

21st Century Learning Skills

Employers, teachers, and college professors have consistently emphasized that today's learners need to possess prerequisite skills to be successful both in the job market and the academic arena. These skills are outlined by Tony Wagner and include collaboration, oral and written communication, agility and adaptability, analyzing and assessing data, entrepreneurialism, curiosity and imagination, and critical thinking and problem solving. Cumberland has embarked on a five-year plan to incorporate 21st Century learning skills into the classroom.

In addition to Cumberland, other counties within Region VIII, including Mecklenburg and Nottoway, are incorporating 21st Century learning techniques. These divisions are willing to share their time and resources with others and plans are currently in place for collaboration among these counties to address student needs. CuCPS is currently in Year 2 of its five-year plan to develop and implement 21st Century learning skills. As part of that plan, CuCPS, like several other Region VIII school divisions, is engaging in book studies. For Year 1, the division focused on *The Global Achievement Gap*, by Tony Wagner. For the current year, the division focused on *Failure Is Not an Option*, by Alan Blankstein. Other books to be included in the study include the following:

- Lighting Their Fires*, by Rafe Esquith
- Teach Like Your Hair Is on Fire*, by Rafe Esquith
- There Are No Shortcuts*, by Rafe Esquith

Out of Our Minds, by Ken Robinson
The Element, by Ken Robinson
Schools Cannot Do It Alone, by Jamie Vollmer
An Ethic of Excellence, by Ron Berger

Other books will be added to the list, based on student and teacher needs.

For all students, including at-risk and special education students, benefits of engaging in 21st Century learning would include the following:

- Increased attendance, growth in self-reliance and improved attitudes toward learning.
- Academic gains equal to or better than those generated by other models, with students involved in projects taking greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Opportunities to increase high-level thinking skills, complex skills, problem-solving skills, collaboration, and communicating.
- Access to a broader range of learning opportunities in the classroom, providing for engaging culturally diverse learners.

By implementing this initiative, community support would help to improve the relationship of the parents, students, and teachers within the school division. A positive learning environment directly affects the community and the pride that it puts on the students and learning. This approach would help not only the students that are enrolled at CuCPS, but also the education of the students' families on current educational trainings and advances in the school system. Cumberland School Board is confident that this approach will be successful and would eventually ripple to several other divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

An important component of this plan is professional development across the region. Year 1 featured the first Region VIII professional development event, with Cumberland arranging for a Region VIII Forum entitled *Revolutionizing Education*; this event featured renowned educator Rafe Esquith. The Region VIII schools taking part in the implementation 21st Century learning techniques are trying to coordinate other trainings and observations for sixty-three schools (63). The Southside Virginia NCLB Partnership worked with the implementation and assisted with this project. This year, schools will have the option to hear either Ron Berger or Stacey Bess. The costs of shifting to 21st Century learning are hard to quantify but will require much staff development. Area schools have had budgets decreased alarmingly; however, coordinating high quality staff development with other schools within the region can lessen the cost. By collaborating with other schools and keeping a more uniform timeline with their calendars, the region should be able to ensure that similar standards are applied from one classroom to the next. Cumberland County Public Schools is confident that implementing 21st Century learning skills will help students develop a deeper level of critical thinking and be able to experience real-world applications. It is the goal of CuCPS to have 21st Century learning skills implemented in all classrooms by 2016.

Implementation of 21st Century learning skills would shift classroom instruction from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning. Instruction would lead to discovery and teachers would become facilitators of instruction instead of transmitters of information. The benefits of employing 21st Century learning are many.

- Students will learn skills that employers value, which will make them more marketable.
- Instruction will appeal to multiple learning styles and address the needs of all students.
- Instruction will result in use of technology in the classroom, which often results in more excited and engaged learners.

- With this innovative initiative, Cumberland County Public Schools can drive improvements in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), while providing a way for students to gain 21st Century skills to be successful in today's dynamic, fast paced, information-rich world.

Research-based Learning Strategies

Research-based learning strategies will be incorporated into the classroom to improve student performance. These strategies will include book talks, Marzano strategies, jigsaw, journaling, KWL charts, scaffolding, project based learning, literature circles, cooperative learning, simulations, and think, pair, share. Training was also offered through the High Schools That Work and the Making Middle Grades Work grants through the Math Design Collaborative and the Literacy Design Collaborative. Teachers will receive professional development in these research-based learning strategies, and may pick and choose among options.

The first of the research-based learning strategies CuCPS will be embarking on with other Region VIII school divisions is Project Based Learning (PBL). Project Based Learning is an instructional model that involves students in the investigation of compelling problems that culminate in authentic products. Projects that make for stronger classroom learning opportunities can vary widely in subject matter and scope, and can be delivered at a wide range of grade levels. Projects put students in an active role such as problem solver, decision maker, investigator, or researcher. Teachers will be trained to serve as facilitators for learning while students will be actively engaged in their own learning through individual and group exploration and problem-solving. While learning essential content is absolutely essential 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 and research which fosters the student's own meaning and relevance for learning, teamwork, cooperation, organization, communication, and reflection.

Professional development is a critical component to the success of the project. Nottoway, Mecklenburg, and Cumberland have partnered in sharing the process of teacher training and collaboration to successfully implement PBL. The goal is to offer summer training not just for these counties, but for all of Region VIII. Cumberland has already attended one training/observation hosted by Charlotte and Mecklenburg in December 2012. With a majority of school divisions in Region VIII on a pre-Labor Day academic schedule, it is imperative to coordinate schedules 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 across **all** grade levels.

Teachers are learning research-based strategies in math and literacy, provided by the Southern Regional Education Board Other through the High Schools that Work and Making Middle Grades Work grants. The goal of these trainings will be to strengthen curriculum and instruction, improve college and career readiness, and improve graduation rates. Cumberland would like to share training methods with practicum and student teachers, which is **only** possible if calendars are aligned with partner colleges and universities.

Another strategy to improve student achievement is "unpacking" the Standards of Learning. "Unpacking" the standards requires teachers to review the actual content and level of cognition that the curriculum should include and design lessons that teach appropriate vocabulary and skills. Then teachers will be shown how to analyze individual student data and use various research-based learning strategies for targeted intervention. This training is needed by teachers in all divisions at all grade levels, including **elementary, middle, and high** school. Teachers could share training opportunities and collaborate if calendars are aligned.

Ensuring that researched-based learning strategies do support the SOLs, partnerships were established with Southside Virginia Community College and Longwood University. Cumberland has joined with other Region VIII school divisions, as well as some outside the region, to participate in the following grants. If funded, these grants will provide professional development to staff members, which would be facilitated by calendar alignment:

Math Science Partnership Grant: Middle School Science Conceptual Modeling - Longwood University, the Longwood Institute for Teaching Through Innovative Practices, and 14 school divisions: Appomattox County, Brunswick County, Charlotte County, Cumberland County, Dinwiddie County, Henry County, Lunenburg County, Mecklenburg County, Nottoway County, Patrick County, Pittsylvania County, Prince Edward County and Prince George County.
Math Science Partnership Grant: Elementary K-5 Integration of Math and Science – Regent University, Longwood University's Institute for Teaching through Technology & Innovative Practices and York County Public Schools. Spaces will be provided for SVRTC school divisions, including Cumberland and other Region VIII schools.
Math Science Partnership Grant: Implementing Authentic Inquiry in Virginia’s Middle and Senior High Schools: The Critical Role of Scientific Argumentation —University of Richmond and area schools. Grant will provide professional development to middle and senior high school science teachers for gaining knowledge and skills to design and implement science lessons that give students a chance to learn scientific concepts in an authentic environment.

Continued professional development in research-based learning strategies as requested by Region VIII schools will be available through the Region VIII Professional Development Council and the Region VIII Educational Office. Plans are currently underway to arrange professional development to review learning strategies for all Region VIII divisions in the areas of math and language arts/literacy. Calendar alignment would greatly facilitate implementation of all training.

Career Readiness

Cumberland County Public Schools has placed great emphasis in grades Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 on providing students with the opportunities to explore career options, formulate career plans and pathways, and develop the credentials to obtain their desired career. CuCPS has reviewed work done by other school divisions such as Mecklenburg County Public Schools to begin to develop a Career Readiness Program to ensure that students receive assistance in planning for their careers.

Furthermore, CuCPS has a culminating course added to the curriculum entitled Senior Project. This mandatory course—required for graduation—ensures that students actively research and pursue a career. In the course, students must complete the following:

1. Select and research a career.
2. Write a documented research paper (minimum 8 pages plus works cited page) that outlines job responsibilities, basic requirements, salary, benefits, career outlook, etc.
3. Make a presentation, with visual aids, about their career to a panel of 5 judges, who grade their presentation.

4. Participate in an internship or complete a project pertaining to their career (minimum of 15 documented hours).
5. Prepare an online portfolio outlining their qualifications (including résumé), their research, their achievements, etc.

In collaboration with SVCC, Cumberland County Public Schools was awarded a planning grant for a regional Governor's Health Science Academy. The region began the implementation of prerequisite courses for juniors this year and implementation of the Health Science Academy for seniors in 2014-2015. The Health Science Academy provides training in Therapeutic Services, Health Informatics, Diagnostic Services, Support Services, and Biotechnology Research and Development. For this regional implementation to be successful, participating schools divisions need a calendar that aligns not only with each other but with SVCC. Cumberland students will also participate in the welding apprenticeship program, which will result in industry certifications for completing the program. Unaligned calendars could result in divisions opting not to participate due to the problems associated with additional transportation and scheduling conflicts.

Cumberland has also been awarded the Rural Math Excellence Partnership (RMEP) Project Grant that will provide opportunities for students to develop skills leading to higher skill, higher paying careers in occupations that require science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) competencies. The partnership includes Charlotte, Halifax, Henry, Martinsville City, and Prince Edward. Having similar calendars would allow for collaboration among partner divisions.

Cumberland has partnered with the counties of Appomattox, Buckingham, Charlotte, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, and Nottoway to apply for the Race to the Top grant. The goals of the grant are to improve STEM education, expose students to a college environment, guide students in establishing career and college goals, use technology to improve education and shift focus to personalized learning and achievement for students. Having the school calendar align with local colleges and universities will be instrumental in the success of this initiative.

Finally, CuCPS is providing the opportunity for all seniors to take the Workplace Readiness test. All students enrolled in Career and Technical courses as Cumberland High School are encouraged to take tests that provide portable credentials, such as the MOUS certification. All students are also encouraged to take PSAT tests as well as SAT's.

Evaluation Procedures

Many of the state reports are presented to the Cumberland School Board and the general public each fall. The reports presented to the School Board include the following:

- Standards of Learning scores
- On-time graduation rates
- AMO gap group data
- Graduation data
- CTE Annual Performance reports

School Board reports generally provide a breakdown of the numbers of advanced diplomas and Associate's degrees. The Guidance Department compiled student information extracted from the student data system for the 2011-2012 school year to be used as a baseline for evaluations. The data for 2012-2013 are as follows:

Data Metric	Percentages
Students attending 4-year colleges/universities	43%
Students attending 2-year colleges	17%
Students attending trade schools/programs	4%
Students joining the military	12%
Students seeking employment	8%
Undecided	16%

Finally, one of the most important aspects of Project 21 is the evaluation piece. The strength and ability to enhance student growth is within authentic assessment, which is the goal of all 21st Century learning, including PBL. Region VIII has focused on PBL as a vehicle to implement 21st Century learning since a well-designed PBL project requires many of these elements, is standards-based pedagogy, and requires a culminating product which is presented publically for a real audience.

In order for the regional PBL initiative to be successful, it is imperative that divisions have strong, ongoing staff development to provide teachers with the tools to guide successful projects. With the pressures of high stakes testing and traditional assessments, teachers and administrators need to make sure they accurately design projects that target the standards of learning. PBL’s intent is not to cover, but to get in depth authentic assessments that truly show a student has mastered a few given standards. When students are going in depth on a targeted standard, a teacher can be confident that they have learned that target. To enhance the quality of the project, teachers need to make sure they are continually assessing throughout a PBL project to ensure their students are getting the content knowledge and skills that they need to complete the project. Therefore collaboration and training needs to be provided for all teachers at all grade levels across the division, which can only effectively be done with calendars that are aligned.

Four Region VIII school divisions, including Charlotte, Cumberland, Mecklenburg, and Nottoway, are already implementing 21st Century learning skills. Three of those divisions (Cumberland, Mecklenburg, and Nottoway) are also implementing PBL. Cumberland will join these counties in coordinating observations and evaluation teams to assess the PBL lessons. These schools will work closely to ensure the lessons feature authentic assessments which cover the standards of learning. Southside Virginia NCLB Office will be assisting in the evaluation of lessons and providing resources to the school divisions involved in this project.

The research-based learning initiative, focusing on “learning by doing,” will be communicated to all staff and community members through meetings, blogs, and the local newspapers. Teachers in the region will form a community of practice to learn, mentor, support, and generate excitement that will extend to the classrooms. Counties already starting prior to Labor Day include Amelia, Appomattox, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Halifax, Lunenburg, Nottoway, and Prince Edward. One of the evaluative criteria will be the number of regional professional development opportunities offered to educators. An administrative team from a VCU/Longwood University doctoral capstone program team will be visiting Cumberland to evaluate the implementation of 21st Century learning skills.

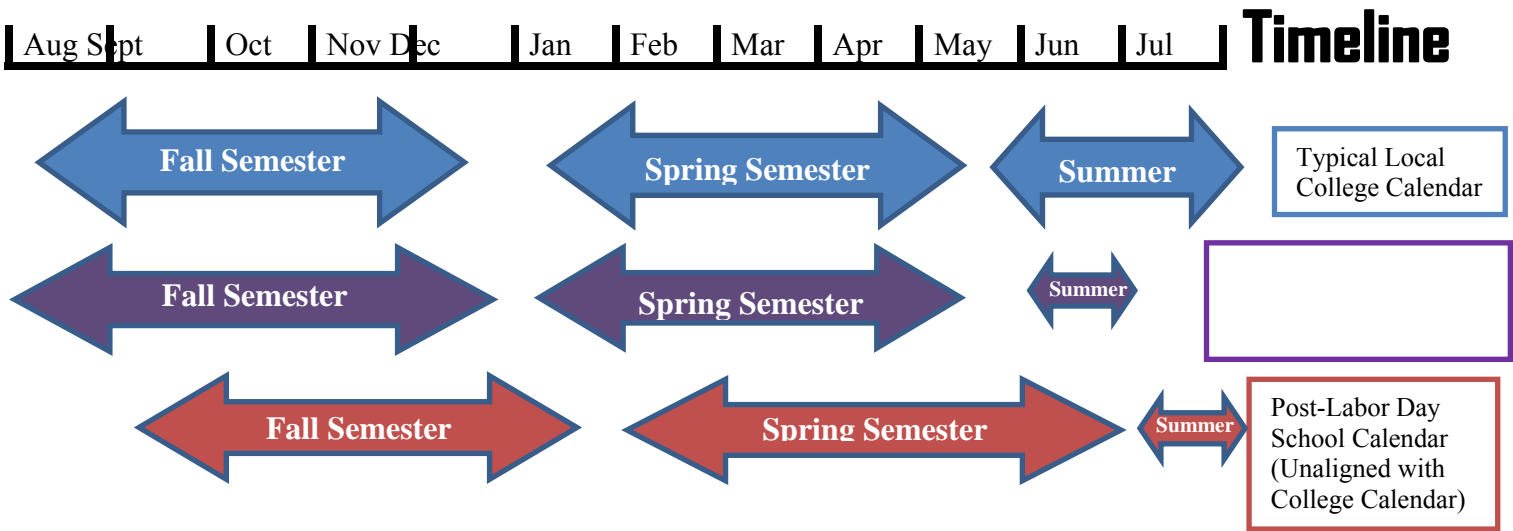
DOES THE PROGRAM REQUIRE THE SCHOOL OR SCHOOLS REFERENCED IN THIS APPLICATION TO OPEN PRIOR TO LABOR DAY?

YES NO.

IF YES, EXPLAIN WHY.

As mentioned previously, Project 21 is designed so that CuCPS can work in collaboration with other Region VIII schools which have similar goals (including incorporating 21st Century skills, utilizing research-based learning strategies, and fostering Career Readiness). Granting approval of this request to allow all three of the schools in the division to open prior to Labor Day is essential to the success of the program. A uniform opening date for all schools in the district would minimize transportation costs (by the sharing of buses among counties to attend programs such as the Regional Governor’s School), maximize planning for professional development, and allow for the sharing of resources (such as teachers). In addition, starting before Labor Day would mirror the schedules of most Region VIII schools and of most colleges and universities, which would, in turn, facilitate participation in regional professional development activities, allow students to take summer college classes, increase the opportunities available to students, and enable teachers to take advantage of summer workshops and courses. Students in the Dual Enrollment program, the Governor’s School program, and the Pre-Engineering program need to have a schedule that correlates to the SVCC schedule. Cumberland also partners with Longwood University, which provides student teachers, interns, and partnership students who help implement the 21st Century skills into classrooms. Cumberland now participates in the Longwood University Partnership School. Longwood also starts prior to Labor Day. Finally, starting prior to Labor Day would allow graduating seniors to have the option of attending summer school immediately following graduation.

The following figure, with table and timeline, lists the goals of Project 21, outlines the importance of aligning calendars with other regional schools, colleges, and universities; presents the difficulties or impossibilities of implementing this plan without starting after Labor Day; and highlights the benefits to students. The figure also provides a graphical depiction of the huge calendar misalignment that occurs between colleges and universities when starting after Labor Day.



Project 21 Emphasis	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 college 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	✓ Most area schools already start prior to Labor Day facilitating shared In-Service programs	? Could possibly be done on a limited basis with much effort involved	All schools	Improves classroom instruction; ensures every student has a highly-qualified teacher.

				Sharing training costs allows more opportunities for improving teacher quality, which results in increased student achievement.
Encourage students to enter college as soon as possible after achieving high school diploma or GED	✓ Students would be able to attend the summer college session upon graduation/GED	✗ Students would have to wait until fall to enter the traditional college setting	Cumberland High School	Gets students into colleges sooner and helps them get acclimated to college during the summer session
Longwood Partnership which provides practicum and student teachers to assist in classrooms	✓ Longwood students could start in the classrooms immediately	✗ Students would miss a month at the beginning of school as well as time at the end of school	All schools	Students benefit from having more educators available to help in the classroom.
Dual Enrollment allowing students to earn an Associate's Degree	✓ Mirroring SVCC's calendar facilitates this program so that CHS students do not have to start earlier than other students	? Dual Enrollment students would have to start early to participate requiring extra transportation	Cumberland High School	Facilitates the attainment of post-secondary degrees
Student Teacher programs from multiple universities, including Liberty & ODU to train teachers & assist CUCPS students	✓ Mirroring local college calendars enables CUCPS to take advantage of student teacher programs	✗ CUCPS is often unable to accommodate student teachers due to calendar misalignment	All Schools	Students benefit from having more educators available to help in the classroom.
Career programs such as SVCC Welding Certification program & Governor's Health Science Academy	✓ Mirroring SVCC's calendar facilitates CHS students participating in these programs	? Students would have to start early to participate requiring extra transportation	Cumberland High School	Facilitates the attainment of industry certifications and career skills
Pre-Engineering career program	✓ Mirroring SVCC's calendar facilitates opportunities to secure jobs in the engineering field	? Students would have to start early to participate requiring extra transportation	Cumberland High School	Allows students to gain career opportunities in STEM

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:

Cumberland Elementary School:

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 activities

3. A switch to student-based learning rather than teacher-led instruction
4. An increase in student attendance due to motivational effect of problem based learning and other research-based learning strategies
5. Improved AMO gap group data
6. Improved scores on Standards of Learning tests
7. Implementation of the Longwood Partnership, which would provide benefits to both Longwood students and CES students (NOTE: starting prior to Labor Day is necessary if practicum students are to participate in the same professional development given to CuCPS staff members.)

Cumberland Middle School:

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 activities
3. A switch to student-based learning rather than teacher-led instruction
4. An increase in student attendance due to motivational effect of problem based learning and other research-based 21st Century learning skills
5. Career inventories conducted for 100% of students
6. Completion of an initial Academic and Career Plan for all students
7. Improved scores on Standards of Learning tests
8. Improved AMO gap group data
9. Improved scores on Standards of Learning tests
10. Implementation of the Longwood Partnership, which would provide benefits to both Longwood students and CMS students (NOTE: starting prior to Labor Day is necessary if practicum students are to participate in the same professional development given to CuCPS staff members.)

Cumberland High School:

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 activities
3. A switch to student-based learning rather than teacher-led instruction
4. An increase in student attendance due to motivational effect of problem based learning and other research-based 21st Century learning skills
5. Successful completion in Senior Project by all graduating seniors
6. Completion of a final Academic and Career Plan for all students
7. Decreased student dropout rate
8. Improved scores on Standards of Learning tests
9. Improved on-time graduation rates
10. Improved AMO gap group data
11. Increased number of students attending institutions of higher learning
12. Increased number of students receiving Associate's Degrees upon graduation from high school
13. Increased number of students receiving industry certifications
14. Implementation of the Longwood Partnership, which would provide benefits to both Longwood students and CES students

SCHOOL DIVISION Cumberland County Public Schools

TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY CuCPS Project 21

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.)

The table below outlines the goals, objectives, and student academic achievement that will be expected as a result of the implementation of the program.

OBJECTIVE 1: IMPLEMENTATION OF 21ST CENTURY SKILLS	
Goals	Resulting Student Academic Achievement
Provide division-wide and regional professional development opportunities for teachers measured by number and type of professional development opportunities offered	Resulting increase in student SOL scores
Develop curriculum, including lesson plans, that incorporate 21 st Century learning skills	Resulting increase in student SOL scores
Switch from teacher-led instruction to student-led classrooms measured by teacher observations and lesson plans	Corresponding motivational effect resulting in decreased student dropout rate, improved on-time graduation rate, increased SOL scores
Inclusion of 21 st Century learning skills in the classroom as monitored by teacher lesson plans and observations	Increased attendance, growth in self-reliance, and improved attitudes toward learning resulting in an increase in student SOL scores and improved AMO gap group data; increase in number of students receiving Associate's Degrees upon completion of high school; increased number of students accepted to institutions of higher learning
OBJECTIVE 2: APPLICATION OF PROJECT BASED LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM	
Goals	Resulting Student Academic Achievement
Provide division-wide and regional professional development opportunities for teachers on project based learning measured by number and type of professional development opportunities offered	Resulting increase in student SOL scores
Develop curriculum, including lesson plans, that incorporate 21 st Century learning skills measured by completed curriculum	Resulting increase in student SOL scores
Provide students with real-world experiences using authentic assessments	Improved problem-solving and critical thinking skills resulting in an increase in SOL scores

OBJECTIVE 3: PROMOTION OF CAREER READINESS FOR ALL STUDENTS	
Increased career awareness by all students as outlined by the Career Discovery Program monitored by guidance counselors and principals	Increase in number of students achieving workplace certificates and increase in number of students taking and passing Workplace Readiness test; increase in the number of career completers
Increased knowledge of processes used to obtain jobs and/or go to college	Increase in number of students attending college; increase in marketable skills achieved by students

Number of students involved in the program	<u>1433</u>
What is the anticipated length of the program or duration of the waiver?	<u>Ongoing</u>

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