Title | First Review of Request for Approval of an Innovative Program Opening Prior to Labor Day from Manassas Park City Public Schools
---|---
Presenter | Dr. Cynthia A. Cave, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications 
Dr. C. Bruce McDade, Superintendent, Manassas Park City Public Schools
E-mail | Cynthia.Cave@doe.virginia.gov
Phone | (804) 225-2092

**Purpose of Presentation:**
Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

**Previous Review or Action:**
No previous review or action.

**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 |
| 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 begins after 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:**
Manassas Park City Public Schools (MPCPS) is requesting a waiver of the requirement that its school year begin after Labor Day, pursuant to § 22.1-79.1 of the Code of Virginia.

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....

In addition, Item 136.A.17 of the 2014 Appropriation Act provides as follows:

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.

For the 2014-2015 school year, 43 school divisions have a waiver for weather-related reasons, five have dependent programs, five are entirely surrounded by a school division that has an opening date prior to Labor Day, 17 have waivers granted through Item 136 of the Appropriation Act, and three school divisions have waivers for innovative or experimental programs.
Summary of Important Issues:

The 2014 General Assembly included state funding for planning grants in the 2014 Appropriation Act to assist interested school divisions in planning for the establishment of year-round school programs. During the 2014 Special Session I, $613,312 were included for both fiscal year 2015 and 2016 for planning grants of no more than $50,000 each for school divisions pursuing the creation of new year-round school programs for divisions or individual schools in support of the findings from the 2012 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) report, *Review of Year-Round Schools*, which was issued in October 2012. (See Item 135.R. of the 2014 Appropriation Act.) The 2012 JLARC report found that Standards of Learning (SOL) test scores of certain student groups, in particular black students, were more likely to increase at a faster rate at year-round schools over the nine-year period from 2001 to 2009 (Chapter 2). In addition, in the report it was suggested that certain school divisions, particularly those with high percentages of student groups that appear to benefit from year-round schools, may want to consider implementing year-round calendars as a method to improve student performance (Chapter 6).

MPCPS received a $50,000 year-round school planning grant for the 2014-2015 school year to support the development of new year-round programs. The school division is composed of four schools: Cougar Elementary School, Manassas Park Elementary School, Manassas Park Middle School, and Manassas Park High School. MPCPS has about 3,200 students with a racial/ethnic breakdown as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three subgroups of concern include the socio-economically disadvantaged, English Language Learners (ELLs), and special education. The largest of these groups, the socio-economically disadvantaged, is approximately 60 percent of the student population based on Free and Reduced Meal Eligibility applications. In addition, MPCPS has 33 percent of its student population receiving ELL services at Level 1 or Level 2 and 12 percent of the student population is identified as receiving special education.

The plan is to begin instruction for the 2015-2016 school year on August 17, 2015. This plan is modeled on one similar to the plan used by another Virginia school division and will include two one-week intersessions. When school ends in June, students will have a two-week break before summer school begins. Summer school will operate for three weeks and then students will have three weeks off before the new school year begins. Many of the students who attend summer school fall within one of the three subgroups of concern.

The calendar was designed by a team of educators from the four schools, transportation, and central office. Numerous modifications were made based on feedback from stakeholders. The calendar for the school division will provide two weeks of intersession which will include intense remediation and enrichment for the students. The first week of intersession will follow the end of the first nine weeks. This time frame will allow for targeted interventions for those students who struggled with the
foundational concepts needed to be successful the remainder of the school year. Enrichment opportunities will include college visits, business internships, SAT and AP test preparation, and educational field trips. The Pre-Labor Day start will provide an additional two weeks of instruction for students in AP classes. All students in the school division will participate in this calendar.

MPCPS would like to realize improvements in sub-group-SOL test scores and ELL proficiency. However, providing remediation to students after school and on Saturdays has not produced the desired results. MPCPS believes that the balanced schedule will improve the pacing of the curriculum, thus improving student understanding and knowledge retention. Targeted intersessions will further bolster student understanding and increased language proficiency and comprehension.

Currently all schools in MPCPS are fully accredited.

**Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:**
The impact on state funds for this request is expected to be minimal.

**Timetable for Further Review/Action:**
Upon approval by the Board of Education, Department of Education staff will notify the Superintendent of Manassas Park City Public Schools that Cougar Elementary School, Manassas Park Elementary School, Manassas Park Middle School, and Manassas Park High School are authorized to open prior to Labor Day beginning with the 2015-2016 school year.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:**
The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education waive first review and approve the request from Manassas Park City Public Schools for an innovative program opening prior to Labor Day, pursuant to the provisions of §.22.1-79.1 of the *Code of Virginia*.

**Rationale:**
Action is recommended at this meeting because Manassas Park City Public Schools meets the Code requirements for an innovative program which may open before Labor Day and to provide maximum time for Manassas Park City Public Schools to prepare to begin instruction for the 2015-2016 school year on August 17, 2015.
Virginia Department of Education

Application for a Planning Grant for School Divisions Pursuing the Development of New Year-Round School Programs for School Divisions or Individual Schools

FY 2014- 2015

School Division: Manassas Park City Schools
Division Superintendent: Bruce McDade
Date of Submission: August 1, 2014
Division Contact: Eric Neff
Telephone No: 703-335-8859
E-mail: eric.neff@mpark.net
Amount of Funding Requested: $50,000
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Assurances and Signatures ................................................................. 3  
Executive Summary ............................................................................ 4  
Name and Contact Information for the Grant Coordinator ....................... 5  
Names and Description of Any Committees Involved in Planning Process ... 5  
Purpose, Goals, and Objectives of the Year-Round Program .................... 6  
Explanation as to Why This School/School Division Wishes to Pursue this Program and the Necessity in Opening Prior to Labor Day ......................... 7  
Logistics for Transportation and Other Support Services Affected by a Year-Round Program ............................................................. 8  
Anticipated Outcomes ......................................................................... 8  
Demographic Information ..................................................................... 8  
Description of Proposed Activities Related to the Involvement of Teachers, Parents, and the Community in the Development and Implementation of the Program ...................................................... 9  
Evaluation Procedures and Data ............................................................. 10  
A Timeline and Description of the Planning Initiatives and Tasks ................. 10  
Budget ............................................................................................... 11  
Appendices ......................................................................................... 15
Assurances and Signatures

By signing and submitting this application, the applicant assures that it will adhere to state and federal laws and regulations governing public schools, including the Virginia Standards of Quality, the Virginia Standards of Learning, and the Virginia Board of Education’s Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia. The applicant assures that all elements of the proposed school, including, but not limited to, the school facility and location and school year calendars, will comport with all state and federal laws and regulations.

The applicant certifies that to the best of his/her knowledge the information in the application is correct, that the applicant has addressed all application elements as required in the Application for a Planning Grant for School Divisions Pursuing the Development of New Year-Round School Programs for School Divisions or Individual Schools, and that the applicant understands and will comply with the assurances.

The applicant assures that the applicant school division plans to implement the year-round program in its division or in individual schools by the 2015-2016 school year.

C. [Signature]
Signature of School Division Superintendent

[Date]

B. [Signature]
Signature of Chairman of School Board

[Date]
Executive Summary
Manassas Park City Schools (MPCS) is a unique school division in Northern Virginia. The division is smaller than most divisions in Region IV, but comparisons in Washington Area Boards of Education annual reports show that it has some of the highest percentages of ELL, socio-economically disadvantaged, and special education populations. This combination presents specific challenges.

MPCS prides itself on providing quality instruction to all students. However, recent SOL test results were not of the caliber expected or accepted by administration. Particularly concerning were the decline in scores in light of the remediation efforts in place across the division. The division has acknowledged that a change in teaching and learning must occur.

Analysis of the SOL and other data indicates that the division must operate differently to meet the needs of all students, but in particular several sub-groups. The JLARC study published on Year-Round Schools suggests a very viable opportunity for MPCS to provide a positive impact on teaching and learning.

MPCS would not have certain financial hardships faced by other individual schools that attempted to move to a year-round calendar. Since the entire division would make the change, the financial increases would be minimized while the improvement in teaching and learning would be maximized.

The administrative staff and School Board is excited to participate in this grant opportunity. Funding for this planning initiative will ensure a successful and well thought-out transition from a traditional to year-round calendar for MPCS.
Name of the School Division and Participating Schools

DIVISION: Manassas Park City Schools (referred to as "MPCS")

Cougar Elementary
9330 Brandon Street
Manassas Park, VA 20111

Manassas Park Elementary
9298 Cougar Court
Manassas Park, VA 20111

Manassas Park Middle School
8202 Euclid Avenue
Manassas Park, VA 20111

Manassas Park High School
8200 Euclid Avenue
Manassas Park, VA 20111

Name and Contact Information for the Grant Coordinator
Manassas Park City Schools is in the process of hiring an Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. This person is expected to play a large role in the planning and development of a year-round school calendar. Eric Neff, Executive Director of Operations, will coordinate the efforts until this person is hired and will likely retain a significant role in the process.

Eric Neff
eric.neff@mpark.net
703-335-8859

Names and Description of Any Committees Involved in Planning Process
Administrative – The Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning is expected to coordinate the planning of this program. The Executive Director, Directors and Principals will provide input regarding their areas of expertise. Since this group currently meets once a month, a majority of the work would be completed during this already scheduled time.

City/School Partnership – The project will need input from the City Government as well as the community at large. While the specific make-up of this team will be decided at a later date, it will likely include City Staff, business leaders and/or a Chamber of Commerce representative, child care facility owners, parents and others. From the
school’s side, the School Board, particularly the chair and vice-chair, will play a lead role in establishing a community partnership. Another key player will be Pam Blake, who has worked extensively with the Superintendent on communications activities and coordination of press personnel when appropriate.

Operations – This team will likely be a subgroup of the first two with a focus on addressing the administrative and operational impact of this type of change.

Teacher Advisory and Intersession Design – Two teams comprised predominantly of classroom educators. The first will help guide the pacing changes that will occur with a more balanced calendar. The second will also include the Director of Assessment. This team will have goals of 1) how to properly identify students for intersessions and 2) how to best provide instruction during intersession.

Human Capital Management – This team will focus on the shift in responsibilities for teachers. With the help of consultants, this group may develop strategies for Career Ladders and associated compensation scales to best meet the needs of the instructional staff and the division.

Purpose, Goals, and Objectives of the Year-Round Program
The Internet is replete with information on the pros and cons of moving to a year-round schedule. A most often cited reason for the change is the reduction or elimination of the "summer learning loss" in various student sub-groups, particularly those classified as socio-economically disadvantaged or LEP. This conclusion is supported by the JLARC study. MPCS believes that moving the entire division to a year-round schedule will have a positive impact on teaching and learning for these sub-groups which are found in relatively high percentages within our school division.

Improved teaching and learning has been found when year-round school calendars included targeted intersessions. These sessions are offered to ensure struggling students are given more immediate opportunities to address areas of weakness. Part of the planning initiative would be to determine the appropriate length of the various intersessions.

Intersessions should not be perceived as solely remediation. This time could be structured in many ways to help students participate in various enrichment opportunities. Most simply, families would have the chance to travel at other than peak travel times without needing to remove their child(ren) from instruction. Specifically at the secondary level, time off beyond spring break could allow students to:
- take preparatory classes for college entrance exams
- make college visits without missing instructional time
- participate in internship or opportunities to explore future career interests

MPCS has found that quite a few families disenroll students during some or all of the months of December and January. Evidence suggests that this primarily Hispanic group uses the time surrounding the winter holidays to travel out of the country to visit
family. MPCS hopes that adjusting the calendar to provide a longer break during this period may limit the number of families pulling their children out of school.

Additional days will be needed throughout the calendar to allow for increased data analysis and embedded professional development. Comprehensive data analysis is critical to identifying the students in need of targeted interventions during each intersession. This type of analysis cannot be completed during the regular school day or by individual teachers in isolation. Specific days must be set aside for collaboration on this task toward the end of, or after, each major instructional period.

More than any of the neighboring jurisdictions, MPCS provides teachers with in-house opportunities for professional development at the beginning of the school year. Just like the students they teach, teachers, especially those with limited experience, need evaluation, support, and the opportunity for growth and improvement throughout the year. Embedding professional development opportunities throughout the year can help teachers refresh and recharge to reduce burn-out and ensure high quality teaching and learning during all instructional periods.

The entire Manassas Park community takes pride in the four beautiful school buildings that were constructed between 1999 and 2009. Current construction projects occurring within the city limits are predominantly residential. Enrollment projections indicate that these lovely schools may reach or exceed capacity during the next decade. With the city not in the financial position to build new facilities, the school division must investigate other options to avoid overcrowding. Moving to year-round schooling better positions MPCS to move to a multi-track calendar which could establish varying school opening dates depending on the track.

**Explanation as to Why This School/School Division Wishes to Pursue this Program and the Necessity in Opening Prior to Labor Day**

In order to facilitate the addition of intersessions and a longer winter break, the school year would need to start prior to Labor Day. This would provide enough instructional days prior to the winter break to complete the first semester grading period. Other benefits include, but are not limited to, additional instructional days for:

- LEP students prior to completing the writing portion of the English SOL
- all students in Advanced Placement classes prior to spring administration of AP testing
- all students prior to PSAT, SAT & ACT test administration

Also, the addition of days for data analysis and PD further increases the need to push the beginning of the school year before Labor Day.

While the ultimate goal would be to achieve a calendar similar to that shown in Appendix 1, it is likely that a phased in approach will be more readily received by the community. Part of the planning work will be to determine the most appropriate opening
and closing dates for SY15-16 and beyond. For the purposes of this application, MPCS expects to move school opening ahead no more than two weeks the first year. This would establish an opening date of August 24, 2015. The year would end June 17, 2016, which is the Friday before Father's Day and consistent with current year-end timing. Since this would become the standard operating schedule for the division, MPCS would request a waiver indefinitely.

**Logistics for Transportation and Other Support Services Affected by a Year-Round Program**

Anticipated impact on transportation and other support services is more a question of changes in timing than expansion of services. This is due to the fact that the entire division would move to the year-round school eliminating the need for multiple transportation schedules.

**Anticipated Outcomes**

MPCS would like to realize improvements in sub-group SOL test scores and ELL proficiency. The current structure of remediation after school or on Saturdays (i.e. extended school hours) have not produced the desired positive outcomes. This is consistent with the findings of the JLARC study. That same study indicates that the MPCS goals may be achieved by moving to a year-round school calendar. MPCS recognizes that current methods are not producing the desired results and the division must embrace proven techniques and methodologies that will have the desired impact on student achievement.

MPCS believes that the balanced schedule will improve the pacing of the curriculum, thus improving student understanding and knowledge retention. The more frequent breaks will have a positive impact on student behavior that will result in increased student and teacher engagement. These breaks will also reduce the “summer learning loss” seen in many of the MPCS student populations. Targeted intersessions will further bolster student understanding and increased language proficiency and comprehension.

**Demographic Information**

Manassas Park is an independent jurisdiction in Northern Virginia, approximately 30 miles southwest of Washington DC. The 2.5 square mile town of Manassas Park borders the much larger jurisdictions of Prince William County and the City of Manassas.
The school division of just over 3,200 students has a race/ethnicity breakdown of:

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Providing the necessary interventions and support services for special populations can be challenging for a smaller school division with more limited resources. Three subgroups of concern are Socio-Economically Disadvantaged, ELL, and Special Education.

The largest of these three groups, Socio-Economically Disadvantaged, held steady throughout the 2013-2014SY at 56% based on Free and Reduced Meal Eligibility Applications.

Meeting SOL and on-time graduation targets can be a challenge for English Language Learners. MPCS has 29% of the student population receiving services at Level 1 or Level 2.

Special Education Students continue to struggle to meet SOL targets. While only 12% of the overall population, there is a great variety of needs within this sub-group.

**Description of Proposed Activities Related to the Involvement of Teachers, Parents, and the Community in the Development and Implementation of the Program**

Each of the teams described previously will hold, at a minimum, monthly meetings to review information, outline future investigations and activities, and prepare for the move to a year-round calendar.

Various members of the teacher and administrative teams will visit schools who are, or have, conducted year-round calendars. The goal of these visits will be to learn from the positive and negative outcomes seen in those divisions. MPCS believe that the visits should include locations within and outside of Virginia. Depending on distance, interviews with other schools may be completed in person or virtually.

MPCS will hold periodic Town Hall meetings in the community to establish a free flow of information and ideas. These meetings will be in addition to regular School Board meetings where updates on the planning process will be shared to ensure all persons affected by this change will have access to the information.
Evaluation Procedures and Data
The Director of Assessment will be a key player in helping all staff better utilize data to determine what, if any, increases in proficiency are realized from this program. The FY15 implementation of a new data warehouse will further facilitate those efforts. Teachers and administrators should be proficient with the use of this tool once YRS begins and will be able to measure improvement using any or all of the following assessment results.

- Quarterly benchmark scores
- SOL scores, particularly for sub-groups
- Intersession pre- and post-assessments
- Class failure rates

MPCS believes that ancillary data in the form of:

- Attendance - both teacher and student
- Parent surveys
- Graduation rates

will also provide positive indications about the program.

A Timeline and Description of the Planning Initiatives and Tasks

JULY
- E-mail to School Board assessing interest in/support for YRS initiative
- Planning Grant writing

AUGUST
- Discussions & planning with administration at leadership retreat
- Announcement of investigation & planning at opening faculty meetings
- Announcement of investigation & planning at School Board meeting
- Announcement of investigation & planning at city Governing Body meeting
- Survey - Parents, Community, Faculty & Students

SEPTEMBER
- Formation of teams
  - Teams will report out on progress at each regular school board meeting throughout the year
- Community Town Hall meeting
- Discussion with various stakeholders groups:
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - NVCC & George Mason
  - Manassas Park Community Center
  - Local child care facilities
OCTOBER – NOVEMBER
- Visit and/or discuss year-round school schedule with other schools/divisions that have implemented YRS. Include both organizations that have discontinued the schedule and those that have continued.

DECEMBER
- Present proposed calendar and receive community feedback

JANUARY
- Develop budget with proposed calendar

FEBRUARY – JUNE
- Teams work with administration on implementation of new programs

Budget
A spreadsheet detailing the expenses is provided in Appendix 2.

Salaries and benefits are the largest component of the budget for this grant request. The planning process requires input from key personnel and consultants outlined below.

SALARIES

Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning
Person: As mentioned previously, MPCS is in the process of interviewing prospective candidates for this position. Selection of the finalist will be made within the next few weeks with the goal of having the selected candidate on board as close as possible to the opening of school in September.
Salary: While a final salary will be dependent on negotiations with the selected candidate, MPCS is projecting an annual contract of $150,000.
Project Time: The grant writing committee estimates that 5% of this person’s time will be used for planning the new year-round school program.

Executive Director of Operations
Person: Mr. Eric Neff served as an administrator in all MPCS schools except for Cougar Elementary. He serves as designee if the Superintendent is away from the division and has responsibility for all aspects of division operations.
Salary: $157,500
Project Time: The grant writing committee estimates that 2% of all director’s time will be used for planning the new year-round school program.
**Director of Assessment**
Person: Mr. Jon Mamon began his career with MPCS as a math teacher and served as an ITRT before moving into his current role. Mr. Mamon supervises all record collections for the state, administration of the MPCS SIS, and will be leading the role out of the new data warehouse.

Salary: $115,686  
Project Time: 2%

**Director of Special Programs**
Person: Mrs. Jennifer Braswell-Gellar began her career as a Special Education Teacher. After a brief period of employment for another division, Mrs. Braswell-Gellar returned to MPCS and has served in various capacities within the Special Education organization before her promotion to her current position. As Director of Special Programs she has invaluable experience working with the city Social Services and Police Departments. Her demonstration of excellent project management skills during division-wide ALiCE training made her the obvious choice to lead the high school’s e-Learning Backpack initiative as part of the division’s digital conversion.

Salary: $115,686  
Project Time: 2%

**Director of Human Resources**
Person: Mrs. Shannon Watson came to MPCS from Fairfax County Schools just over a year ago. In that short time, she brought improved structure and focus to the Human Resources Department and provided critical leadership on the implementation of a new Human Resource Information System. Her innovative ideas around compensation, teacher training, and staff empowerment will be critical to the success of the year-round school program.

Salary: $108,675  
Project Time: 2%

**Director of Financial Services**
Person: Mrs. Krista Kelly is a career switcher who began her career with MPCS as a math teacher after working in finance for two Fortune 500 companies. She brings a unique understanding of instruction not typically found in this central office role. The success of the year-round school project will rely on her work to identify and contain increased expenditures and/or secure additional sources of funding.

Salary: $115,686  
Project Time: 2%
**Principals**

Person: Pam Terry – Cougar Elementary  
Stacey Mamon – Manassas Park Elementary  
Pam Kalso – Manassas Park Middle School  
Debbie Bergeron – Manassas Park High School  

As the instructional leaders at each school in the division, the principal’s insights on teaching and learning will be key. They will be instrumental facilitating the teacher transition to a year-round school calendar.

Salary: 506,958 (Combined)  
Project Time: 2%

**Teachers**

Person: (8) TBD – two per school  

Embedded involvement of classroom teachers is necessary to properly alter curriculum and pacing guides and to determine the most appropriate structure for intersession classes.

Salary: $8,000 – Stipends of $1,000 each  
Project Time: Minimum of 4 hours monthly

**Substitutes**

Person: TBD – Substitutes will be needed to cover classrooms for participating teachers during planning sessions or site visits that cannot take place outside of school hours.

Salary: $85 per day  
Project Time: Estimating 16 occurrences; max of two days per person

**Administrative Assistant to Superintendent**

Person: Mrs. Pam Blake provides significant assistance to the division related to communications. She has been instrumental in the handling and coordination of press personnel for major and minor events at MPCS. She has also produced significant improvements in the content and design of the division website.

Salary: $79,247  
Project Time: 2%

**Consultants**

Organization: TBD – Selected organizations may assist with curriculum mapping, operational activities, and/or salary structure analysis and development.

Cost: $10,000

**BENEFITS**

It is assumed that the 7.65% FICA payment required on all listed salaries will be covered by the project grant.
TRAVEL
Until specific arrangements are made it is difficult to estimate the travel cost associated with the year-round school planning process. However, the grant writing committee recognizes that some trips will be local requiring only gas and food expenditures. Others may require overnight stays.

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES
This category is difficult to identify in advance. The following types of charges are expected during the planning process:

- The grant writing committee believes that books and/or articles about year-round schooling will be provided to the various committee members.
- While planned surveys will be sent out using Survey Monkey to reduce printing and postage costs, there are a portion that will need to be printed.
- Communication with divisions outside of Virginia made b accomplished via teleconference, thus incurring long-distance charges.
- Food and beverages at various Town Hall and other meetings and events.
Appendices
Appendix 1

Year-Round School Planning Grant Potential Calendar

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**Legend**
- **Q1**: School Day - First Quarter
- **I1**: Intersession #1
- **Q2**: School Day - Second Quarter
- **I2**: Intersession #2
- **Q3**: School Day - Third Quarter
- **I3**: Intersession #3
- **Q4**: School Day - Fourth Quarter
- **I4**: Intersession #4
- **T**: Teacher Work Day
- **F**: Federal Holiday
- **AH**: All Holiday
- **TH**: Teacher Holiday
## Year-Round School Planning Grant Budget

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**TOTAL SALARIES & BENEFITS** 49,265.00 3,003.77 53,975.02

Travel 5,000.00

Materials 1,500.00

**LOCAL FUNDING** (10,475.02)

**TOTAL GRANT REQUEST** 50,000.00
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.) set 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 Manassas Park City Schools

TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY Manassas Park City Schools Balanced Calendar

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:

D Approval of an Alternative to the Standard School Year and School Day (8 VAC 20-131-150)
D Approval of an Alternative Accreditation Plan (8 VAC 20-131-280.D)
D Approval of an Experimental Program (§ 22.1-79.1 of the Code of Virginia and 8 VAC 20-131-290.D)
xD Approval of an Innovative Program (§ 22.1-79.1 of the Code of Virginia and 8 VAC 20-131-290.D)
D Approval of a Waiver of Other Provision(s) of the Standards (8 VAC 20-131-350)

(School or Schools Involved in the Proposed Program/Activity)

Cougar Elementary School,
Manassas Park Elementary School
Manassas Park Middle School
Manassas Park High School

March 23, 2015
Date Approved
by the Local School Board

June 2, 2015
Submission Date

Chairman of the School Board
Division Superintendent
SCHOOL DIVISION  
Manassas Park City Schools

TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY  
Manassas Park City Schools Balanced Calendar


Background/Type of Program

Manassas Park City Schools applied for and received the year round planning grant in August 2014. During the past ten months, personnel from the school division visited school divisions in the state that are operating an innovative calendar or planning to do so in 2015-16. Those school divisions were Lynchburg City Schools which has an elementary school operating as a full year round model, Radford City Schools which is in the planning stage like MPCS, and Galax City Schools which is using a more balanced approach for its academic school year calendar. After researching the impact of the various models as well as holding numerous stakeholder meetings with teachers, parents, students, local government officials, community members, and local businesses, it became evident that while the full year round model would best benefit our students, it would be too much a leap for all of our stakeholders in year one. At that point we turned our direction to a more balanced approach for the 2015-16 school year, (August 17, 2015 start date) with the idea of moving towards a complete year round approach in the future. We have modeled our calendar like the one used by Galax City Schools during the 2014-15 school year which includes a Pre-Labor Day start and two one week intersessions built in during the year. We visited Galax to speak with school and school board officials in the fall and returned to observe two days of an intersession week in February.

Purpose/Grades Served

The calendar for the school division will provide for two weeks (Intersessions) of intense remediation and enrichment for students. The first week will be immediately following the end of the first nine weeks. This time frame would allow for targeted interventions for those students that struggled with the foundational concepts needed to be successful the remainder of the school year. Enrichment opportunities include college visits, business internships, SAT preparation, AP testing preparation, and educational field trips. The second intersession will occur in late April prior to AP and SOL assessments. Intervention and enrichment will be similar during both weeks during the year. The Pre-Labor Day start will also provide an additional two weeks of instruction for students scheduled in AP classes. All students in our schools PreK-12 would participate in the Balanced Calendar.

Demographic Information

Manassas Park is an independent jurisdiction in Northern Virginia approximately 30 miles southwest of Washington DC. The 2.5 square mile town of Manassas Park borders the much larger jurisdictions of Prince William County and the City of Manassas. The school division of just over 3,200 students has a race/ethnicity breakdown of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
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<td>Asian</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
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Three subgroups of concern included; Socio-Economically Disadvantaged, English Language Learners, and Special Education. The largest of these three groups, Socio Economically Disadvantaged, is approximately 60% of the student population based on Free and Reduced Meal Eligibility Applications. MPCS has 33% of its student population receiving English as a Second Language Services at Level 1 or Level 2. Twelve percent of our population is identified as Special Education.

The Goals and Objectives

The thought process throughout the planning was to limit the length of the summer break by "chunking" the teaching and learning throughout the entire twelve months. When school ends in June, students will have a two week break before summer school begins.
Many of the students that attend summer school fall within one of the three subgroups mentioned above. Summer school will operate for three weeks, and then students will have three weeks off before the new school year begins on August 17, 2015.

With the ten intersession days, instruction will occur for 186 days. Students in Manassas Park City Schools attend each day for 6 hours and 15 minutes. We feel that this calendar meets the goals and objectives.

Program Goals

MPCS would like to realize improvements in sub-group SOL test scores and English Language Learners proficiency. The current structure of remediation after school or on Saturdays (i.e. extended school hours) have not produced the desired positive outcomes. This is consistent with the findings of the JLARC study. That same study indicates that the MPCS goals may be achieved by moving to a balanced approach school calendar. MPCS recognizes that current methods are not producing the desired results and the division must embrace proven techniques and methodologies that will have the desired impact on student achievement. MPCS believes that the balanced schedule will improve the pacing of the curriculum, thus improving student understanding and knowledge retention. The more frequent breaks will have a positive impact on student behavior that will result in increased student and teacher engagement. These breaks will also reduce the "summer learning loss" seen in many of the MPCS student populations. Targeted intersessions will further bolster student understanding and increased language proficiency and comprehension.

Evaluation Procedures and Data

The Director of Assessment will be a key player in helping all staff better utilize data to determine what, if any, increases in proficiency are realized from this program. The FY 15 implementation of a new data warehouse will further facilitate those efforts. Teachers and administrators should be proficient with the use of this tool once the balanced calendar begins and will be able to measure improvement using any or all of the following assessment results.

- Quarterly benchmark scores
- SOL scores, particularly for sub-groups
- Intersession pre- and post-assessments
- Class failure rates

MPCS believes that ancillary data in the form of:

- Attendance - both teacher and student
- Parent surveys
- Graduation rates

will also provide positive indications about the program.

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

☐ YES  □ NO.

IF YES, EXPLAIN WHY.

The Internet is replete with information on the pros and cons of moving to a year-round schedule. A most often cited reason for the change is the reduction or elimination of the "summer learning loss" in various student sub-groups, particularly those classified as socio-economically disadvantaged or Limited English Proficient. This conclusion is supported by the JLARC study. MPCS believes that moving the entire division to a year-round schedule will have a positive impact on teaching and learning for these sub-groups which are found in relatively high percentages within our school division. Improved teaching and learning has been found when year-round school calendars included targeted intersessions. These sessions are offered to ensure struggling students are given more immediate opportunities to address areas of weakness. MPCS believes that the balanced schedule will improve the pacing of the curriculum, thus improving student understanding and knowledge retention. The more frequent breaks will have a positive impact on student behavior that will result in increased student and teacher engagement. These breaks will also reduce the “summer learning loss” seen in many of the MPCS student populations. Targeted intersessions will further bolster student understanding and increased language proficiency and comprehension.

Other benefits include, but are not limited to, additional instructional days for:

☐ Limited English Proficient students prior to completing the writing portion of the English SOL
☐ all students in Advanced Placement classes prior to spring administration of AP testing
☐ all students prior to PSAT, SAT & ACT test administration
Also, the addition of days for data analysis and PD further increases the need to push the beginning of the school year before Labor Day. While the ultimate goal would be to achieve a full year round calendar, it was clear from our stakeholders that a phased in approach will be more readily received by the community. Part of the planning work was done to determine the most appropriate opening and closing dates for SY15-16 and beyond. For the purposes of this application, MPCS expects to move school opening ahead three weeks the first year. This would establish an opening date of August 17, 2015. The year would end June 17, 2016, which is the Friday before Father's Day and consistent with current year-end timing. Since this would become the standard operating schedule for the division, MPCS would request a waiver indefinitely.

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.

The research from the JLARC study supports the idea of decreasing the summer break and providing targeted remediation has a positive impact on the academic performance of English Language Learners, low socio-economic students, and other minority populations. These combined sub groups represent the majority of the student population in Manassas Park City Schools.

DESCRIBE THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAM FOR EACH SCHOOL.

MPCS believes that we will be able to measure improvement using any or all of the following assessment results.

- Quarterly benchmark scores
- SOL scores, particularly for sub-groups
- Intersession pre- and post-assessments
- Class failure rates

MPCS believes that ancillary data will also provide positive indication about the program. That would be collected in the form of:

- Intersession and yearly attendance data- both teacher and student
- Parent surveys
- Graduation rates

SCHOOL DIVISION Manassas Park City Schools

TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY Manassas Park City Schools Balanced Calendar

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.

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.)

Number of students involved in the program Approximate 3200, All Students in the school division
What is the anticipated length of the program or duration of the waiver? Indefinitely

Questions should be directed to the Division of Policy and Communications at (804) 225-2092, or by e-mail to policvdata/ildoe.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
The School Board of Manassas Park City Schools adopted the 2015-16 academic school calendar at its March 23rd meeting. The calendar that was adopted is a product of months of research, site visits, community and government meetings, as well as many individual staff meetings held at each of our four schools. Each of these events were designed to produce a forum for stakeholders to ask questions, provide feedback and recommendations, as well as understand the thought processes for entertaining the idea of implementing an alternative calendar for Manassas Park.

With the implementation of a new calendar, MPCS presents a more balanced approach to teaching and learning which we believe will have a positive impact for these sub-groups which are found in relatively high percentages within our school division. Below is the chart included in the writing of the original grant proposal.

**Demographics**
The school division of just over 3,200 students has a race/ethnicity breakdown of:

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<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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Three subgroups of concern included; Socio-Economically Disadvantaged, ESOL, and Special Education. The largest of these three groups, Socio Economically Disadvantaged, is approximately 60% of the student population based on Free and Reduced Meal Eligibility Applications. MPCS has 33% of its student population receiving ESOL services at Level 1 or Level 2. Twelve percent of our population is identified as Special Education.

**The Decision**
The calendar was designed by a team of educators from the four schools, transportation, and the central office. Numerous modifications were made throughout the process based on feedback from stakeholders. Eventually consensus was reached for a start date of August 17. Two intersession weeks were built into the calendar for interventions and enrichment. The first intersession week will occur immediately at the end of the first nine weeks. The second intersession (late April) will occur just prior to Advanced Placement and SOL testing. An end date of June 15th is very similar to the last day of the 2014-15 academic calendar.
The Goals and Objectives
The thought process throughout the planning was to limit the length of the summer break by “chunking” the teaching and learning throughout the entire twelve months. When school ends in June, students will have a two week break before summer school begins. Many of the students that attend summer school fall within one of the three subgroups mentioned above. Summer school will operate for three weeks, and then students will have three weeks off before the new school year begins on August 17th. With the ten intersession days, instruction will occur for 186 days. Students in Manassas Park City Schools attend each day for 6 hours and 15 minutes. We feel that this calendar meets the goals and objectives.

The Calendar
The 2014-15 academic school year calendar is included in the attachments.

Timeline
The Balanced Calendar Timeline is provided as an attachment. As stated in the original proposal, one can see that we held true to our planned activities, although the timeline was a little later than was stated. Staff, local government, and community meetings, site visits all contributed to valuable feedback from our stakeholders.

The Implementation Process
With the start date settled, we have written job descriptions for two intersession coordinators at each building and one for the division to begin the planning process for each of our intersession weeks next year. Interviews have concluded and those positions have been filled. Those staff members along with central office administrators will develop community and business relationships, build a program of studies, schedule transportation and field trip request, as well as assist in the administration of the intersession weeks. We really hope to become a model for other school divisions considering an alternative calendar.
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