



Office of the Dean

College of Education and Human Development  
4400 University Drive, MS 2F1, Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
Phone: 703-993-2004; Fax: 703-993-2001

Date: January 18, 2013

To: Virginia Board of Education (VaBOE)

From:

Handwritten signature of Mark R. Ginsberg in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Mark R. Ginsberg, Dean  
College of Education & Human Development

Handwritten signature of Jack Dale in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Jack Dale, Superintendent  
Fairfax County Public Schools

Handwritten signature of Peter Stearns in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Peter Stearns, Provost  
George Mason University

RE: Submission of **Revised** Lab School Application for Opening in September 2013

We are pleased to submit for review and consideration this **revised** application for a College Partnership Laboratory School. This revised version is in response to the feedback provided to us in the letter from Dr. Patricia I. Wright (dated November 27, 2012) and the feedback received during the videoconference (Friday, November 30, 2012). At the end of this videoconference we were advised to do a complete revision of the application and address the specific feedback from the VaBOE reviewers within this revised version. To assist the VaBOE reviewers, we are including as an Enclosure a summary of the feedback from the original submission that includes the pages in this revised version where we have addressed each request for clarification and additional information.

Again, we are appreciative for the no-cost extension for the "planning grant" that was awarded to Mason to continue our comprehensive planning process to be in position to open Mason's Patriot Innovation Academy (PIA) in September 2013 (pending approval). Building on a long-standing and deep collaborative relationship, Mason in collaboration with Fairfax County Public Schools (FPCS) intends to provide a flagship laboratory school for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Enclosure: Overview of Revisions that Address Requests for Clarification/Additional Information

**Overview of Revisions that Address Requests for  
Clarification/Additional Information**

**Additional Information and Clarification Requested for  
Virginia College Partnership Laboratory School Application**

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
The Patriot Innovation Academy (PIA)  
Partnering with Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)**

The application for The Patriot Innovation Academy (PIA) from George Mason University has been reviewed to determine if additional information is needed. Overall, details need to be provided in all sections of the application to clearly provide information on the operation of all aspects of the PIA. The school is proposed to be co-located at Lake Braddock School, and the overall challenge in reviewing the application is to understand how PIA will operate as George Mason University's college partnership laboratory school.

**I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- The overview needs to clearly articulate the PIA college partnership laboratory school's purpose, goals and objectives. There should be clear metrics to identify whether goals and objectives will be met.

*Page 3*

- Throughout the document, there are references to PIA as a Fairfax County public school which does not conform to the *Code* definition of a laboratory school. Throughout the application, there are references to the responsibilities of Fairfax County Public Schools in providing services to the school; however, the application clearly needs to provide information on how PIA will operate as a separate school.

*Pages 3, 29, 39, and throughout the document.*

**II. MISSION STATEMENT**

- Section 23-299.2 of the *Code of Virginia* states, in part, the following:

*E. An approved college partnership laboratory school shall be designated as a local education agency, but shall not constitute a school division.*

*F. College partnership laboratory schools are encouraged to develop collaborative partnerships with public school divisions for the purpose of building seamless education opportunities for all Virginia students, from preschool to postsecondary education. An educational program provided to students enrolled in a public school division pursuant to a collaborative partnership between the college partnership*

*laboratory school and the public school division shall be considered to be the educational program of the public school division for purposes of the Standards of Accreditation.*

The application must be clear that PIA is a school operated by George Mason University. College partnership laboratory schools are subject to the Standards of Learning, Standards of Accreditation and Standards of Quality. Using the *Standards of Accreditation*, it may be helpful to review these standards and provide to the Board of Education how this school will comply with the requirements. Detail how the school will operate as a school, partnering with FCPS.

*Pages 5, 6, 7*

- The academic concentration of the school needs to be clearly stated. Additional information needs to be provided regarding details of the integration of subject areas. Examples: An explanation of how all subjects (including health, physical education, music, etc.) will be delivered needs to be outlined. The areas listed as concentration areas include technical education, but no specificity of detail for the Career and Technical Education is provided.

*Pages 8 and throughout the Educational Program section*

- Section 23-299.2. Establishment and operation of college partnership laboratory schools; requirements, of the *Code of Virginia* states, in part, the following:

*A. A college partnership laboratory school shall be subject to all federal and state laws and regulations and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services.*

*Enrollment shall be open to any child who is deemed to reside within the Commonwealth through a lottery process on a space-available basis.*

*[emphasis added] A waiting list shall be established if adequate space is not available to accommodate all students whose parents have requested to be entered in the*

*lottery process. Such waiting list shall also be prioritized through a lottery process and parents shall be informed of their student's position on the list.*

The application appears to be out of compliance since it pre-identifies a large number of students to enroll in the school.

*Pages 5, 9*

### III. EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- The application needs to provide an explanation of the comprehensive curriculum and how student achievement will be assessed and reported. The application references Fairfax County Public Schools, but it does not give sufficient information to ensure that students will meet all requirements.

*Pages 13, 19, 20*

- Additional information needs to be provided regarding plans for the identification of English Language Learners (ELLs), students with disabilities, and gifted students. Also, please address how services will be provided to the PIA students.

*Pages 14, 15, 16*

- Additional information needs to be provided on the school's academic program. A detailed explanation of the total curriculum, including music, visual arts, health and physical education, etc., is needed.

*Pages 5, 7, 10, 11, 12*

- The application proposes to use virtual and online courses. The application does not detail the providers to be used and the number of potential participating students and in what subject areas the students will be participating in virtual courses. In addition, the application references evening and Saturday classes; however, it is difficult to determine whether such courses are an enrichment program or part of the required curriculum.

*Pages 12, 25*

- This response states that PIA will be a Fairfax school (Reference question 4 of this section); however, the application is for a college partnership laboratory school. The application needs to be clear that the college partnership laboratory school (PIA) is operated by George Mason University and is not a Fairfax County public school.

*Throughout the document*

- Detail needs to be provided on how PIA will ensure compliance with federal and state laws.

*Pages 9, 10*

- Additional information is needed on how the school will examine teaching strategies, curriculum alignment, level of rigor, pacing, overall teacher effectiveness, etc., if the school fails to meet state accreditation standards. Also, the procedures are not specific regarding how the stakeholders would be involved in the process or what components

would be included in the school improvement plans. The narrative did not include information regarding submission of the improvement plan and the annual updates to the Virginia Department of Education.

*Pages 6, 7, 16*

- Although there is approximate information about the total number of students in each grade, there is no information on the student-teacher ratio. Additional information needs to be provided regarding staffing. The proposal references only six teachers for 200 students. Provide how staffing requirements of the *Standards of Quality* and *Standards of Accreditation* will be met.

*Page 6, 17*

- The information provided is insufficient to determine the student-teacher ratio or "caseload" for teachers of special education.

*Page 13, 14*

- Refer to Section 22.1-98 of the *Code of Virginia* that requires the school year to be 180 instructional days or 990 instructional hours. There needs to be clarity regarding the proposed calendar to ensure compliance with the *Code*.

*Page 18*

- The assessment and evaluation plan is vague, in that it does not define specific process and outcome measures for the major objectives articulated in the application. The application must define concrete performance targets, reporting methods, and timetables.

*Pages 20, 21, 22, 23, 24*

#### **IV. GOVERNANCE**

- Section 23-299.2 of the *Code of Virginia*, states, in part the following:

*A. A college partnership laboratory school shall be subject to all federal and state laws and regulations and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services.*

*Enrollment shall be open to any child who is deemed to reside within the Commonwealth through a lottery process on a space-available basis. A waiting list shall be established*

*if adequate space is not available to accommodate all students whose parents have requested to be entered in the lottery process. Such waiting list shall also be prioritized through a lottery process and parents shall be informed of their student's position on the list.*

*B. A college partnership laboratory school shall be administered and managed by a governing board. Pursuant to a contract and as specified in § 23-299.3, a college partnership laboratory school shall be subject to the requirements of the Standards of Quality, including the Standards of Learning and the Standards of Accreditation, and such regulations as determined by the Board of Education.*

*C. Pursuant to a college partnership laboratory school agreement, a college partnership laboratory school shall be responsible for its own operations, including, but not limited to, such budget preparation, contracts for services, and personnel matters as are specified in the agreement. A college partnership laboratory school may also negotiate and contract with a school board, the governing body of an institution of higher education, or any third party for the use of a school building and grounds, the operation and maintenance thereof, and the provision of any service, activity, or undertaking that the college partnership laboratory school is required to perform in order to carry out the*

*educational program described in its contract. Any services for which a college partnership laboratory school contracts with a school board or institution of higher education shall not exceed the school division's or institution's costs to provide such services.*

- The governance of the PIA needs clarification. For example, the Governing Board appears to advise the "sub-principal" on daily management; however, the individual is an employee of FCPS.

*Pages 26, 27, 28, 37*

- The chain of command and roles for the employees need to be clearly delineated.

*Pages 27, Appendix J*

- Clarity is needed regarding the college partnership laboratory school's responsibility for its own operations and exactly what services will be provided by the school and those services provided by the school division.

*Pages 26, 40, 42, 43*

## **V. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

- Section 23-299.8. Employment of professional, licensed personnel of the *Code of Virginia* states, in part, the following:



A. College partnership laboratory school personnel shall be employees of the institution of higher education establishing the school.

*B. Teachers working in a college partnership laboratory school shall hold a license issued by the Board of Education or, in the case of an instructor in the higher education institution's Board-approved teacher education program, be eligible to hold a Virginia teaching license. Teachers working in a college partnership laboratory school shall be subject to the requirements of §§ 22.1-296.1, 22.1-296.2, and 22.1-296.4 applicable to teachers employed by a local school board.*

*C. Professional, licensed personnel of a college partnership laboratory school shall be granted the same employment benefits given to professional, licensed personnel in public schools in accordance with the agreement between the college partnership laboratory school and the Board of Education.*

- The recruitment of staff appears to be through FCPS. Then the application states that the Executive Director will be tasked with completing the hiring of the remainder of staff. There needs to be clarification on the employment process.

*Pages 29, 30*

- The information states that the executive director will need to hold a Postgraduate Professional License with an endorsement in administration and supervision or as a secondary principal. This school level is middle, not secondary; therefore, the endorsement as a secondary principal would not be in compliance with state requirements.

*Pages 30, 33*

- The PIA teachers are required to hold a Postgraduate Professional License with experience with "secondary" students. More detail on teachers' assignments and endorsements is needed. There is no information on how other staff will work within the school and how compliance will be monitored.

*Page 31*

- More detail is needed regarding the assignment of teachers to students in all areas of assignments.

*Page 17*

- Support services will be provided through an agreement with Fairfax County Schools. PIA will use the same food service, nurses, custodial, and security services. The MOU states that a more detailed school services agreement will be developed. The details of the agreement will need to be provided.

*Page 34, 37, 40, 44 and Appendix S*

## **VI. FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONS INFORMATION**

- The budget for PIA needs to be comprehensive and transparent. The full per-pupil cost of the school needs to be clear. Such costs as school facilities, support services, staffing, food services, insurance, etc., need to be identified and articulated in the budget.

*Pages 40, 41, 42*

- More detail should be provided on revenues and financial controls and audit requirements. Detail also needs to be included on specific programs, such as budget for information technology, career and technical education, special education. Additional details are needed on expected revenues from external grants/fundraising.

*Pages 40, 41, 42, 43*

- It is very important that negotiations on major cost items are finalized in terms of in-kind support that the division will provide and the impact on the funding be provided.

*Pages 41, 42*

- Since the lab school is not a Fairfax County public school, additional detail is needed to ensure insurance coverage.

*Page 43*

- Information on transportation services need to be provided. The school day shows that students will take courses in the morning, afternoon, evening, and weekends. How transportation will be managed for these students needs to be outlined. Additional clarification is needed regarding transportation, for children with disabilities who may be outside of their transportation area of Lake Braddock Secondary School.

*Page 34, 45*

- Even though the application states that food services will be provided by PCPS, information regarding the agreement to provide services needs to be detailed.

*Page 45*



## **VII. PLACEMENT PLAN**

- Clarify the role of the host school administrator in the role of a school leader. The host school administrator is an employee of Fairfax County public schools; therefore, his or her role as a partner in the administration of the school.

*Page 45*

- Clarify who is responsible for the placement plan in the event the school closes. The application states that the process will be carried out according to FCPS' guidelines; however, it is not clearly stated who will carry out these procedures.

*Pages 45, 46, 47*

## **VIII. OTHER ASSURANCES AND REOUIREMENTS**

- A statement that the assurances will be enforced and implemented.

*Pages 48, 49, 50*

- Please provide responses to all items requested in this section.

*Pages 48, 49, 50*