



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
Subcommittee on Laboratory Schools

September 20, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference and PBS North Carolina Livestream
UNC System Office
140 Friday Center Drive, Room 128
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

AGENDA

- A-1. Approval of the Minutes of March 21, 2021.....C. Philip Byers
- A-2. Lab School Renewal: Appalachian State Academy at Middle Fork..... Laura Bilbro-Berry
- A-3. Lab School Renewal: D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy Laura Bilbro-Berry
- A-4. Standards for Establishing Certain Costs for Lab Schools Laura Bilbro-Berry
- A-5. Adjourn



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
Subcommittee on Laboratory Schools

DRAFT OPEN MINUTES

March 21, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.
Via Videoconference and PBS North Carolina Livestream
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

This meeting of the Subcommittee on Laboratory Schools was presided over by Chair C. Philip Byers. The following subcommittee members were also present by phone, constituting a quorum: Jimmy Clark and Wendy Murphy.

Reggie Holley was absent.

Staff members present included Dr. Andrew Kelly, Dr. Laura Bilbro-Berry, and others from the UNC System Office.

1. Approval of the Minutes of February 14, 2022 (Item A-1)

The chair reminded all members of the committee of their duty under the State Government Ethics Act to avoid conflicts of interest and the appearances of a conflict of interest. The chair asked if there were any conflicts or appearances of conflict with respect to any matter coming before the committee. No members identified any conflicts at the time.

The chair next called for a motion to approve the open session minutes of February 14, 2022.

MOTION: Resolved, that the Subcommittee on Laboratory Schools approved the open session minutes of February 14, 2022, as distributed.

Motion: Jimmy Clark

Motion carried

2. Request to Establish a Laboratory School: North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (Item A-2)

Chair Byers called on Dr. Laura Bilbro-Berry to share a request from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to establish its new lab school. Dr. Bilbro-Berry introduced Dean Fouad Abd-El-Khalick to present on the new lab school for UNC-Chapel Hill.

Upon completion of the presentation, Chair Byers called for a motion to approve the resolution provided in the board materials.

MOTION: Resolved, that the Subcommittee on Laboratory Schools approve the resolution to establish a new laboratory school at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Motion: Jimmy Clark

Motion Carried

A-3. Adjourn

There being no further business and without objection, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Raymond Palma, Secretary

AGENDA ITEM

- A-2. Laboratory School Renewal: Appalachian State University's Academy at Middle Fork..... Laura Bilbro-Berry

Situation: Pursuant to G.S. 116-239.7, a laboratory school shall operate for a period of five years. At the end of the initial five years of operation, the subcommittee shall renew the term of operation for additional five-year periods if the laboratory school is still located in a local school administrative unit that has 25 percent or more of its schools identified as low-performing under G.S. 115C-105.37, or if the subcommittee renews a waiver of this requirement. If the laboratory school is no longer (i) located in a qualifying local school administrative unit or (ii) meeting the purposes of this Article under a waiver at the end of five years, the subcommittee may renew the term of operation for additional five-year periods if the subcommittee finds the school is successfully meeting its mission to improve student performance and provide valuable exposure and training for teachers and principals in the constituent institution's educator preparation program.

Background: In 2018, in partnership with Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools, Appalachian opened the Appalachian State University Academy at Middle Fork, a K-5 school located in Walkertown. The Academy at Middle Fork is committed to developing the whole child, addressing social, emotional, cognitive, and developmental needs. The Academy uses a workshop (or small group, project-based) approach for students in all grades and builds literacy skills in all core content areas.

The 2022-23 school year marks the fifth year of operation for the Academy at Middle Fork. Appalachian is seeking a renewal period of five additional years to operate.

Assessment: A renewal report summarizing the progress of the school is presented for subcommittee review. The school will provide a brief presentation to outline its successes to date, describe plans, and propose renewal for an additional five years of operation.

Action: This item requires a vote by the committee.

Appalachian State Academy at Middle Fork

Appalachian State University operates the Appalachian State University Academy at Middle Fork, a K-5 school located in Walkertown, NC that was previously operated by Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools. The Academy at Middle Fork opened in August 2018 with a mission to provide a balanced education for children, teachers, principals, and families through the implementation of research-based practices and exemplary classroom instruction and school administration. The Academy at Middle Fork is committed to developing the whole child, including addressing social, emotional, cognitive, and developmental needs. The school uses a workshop (or small group, project-based) approach for students in all grades and builds literacy skills in all core content areas.

Enrollment:

Per G.S. 116-239.9, laboratory schools must be elementary and/or middle schools serving students between grades kindergarten and eighth. To be eligible to enroll, students must be zoned for a low-performing school (those receiving a performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of "met expected growth" or "not met expected growth" on the required state assessments) and/or be underperforming themselves on appropriate measures of academic performance. In 2020, the legislature created flexibility for lab schools to enroll students within the partnering school district that do not qualify under this eligibility criteria provided those students do not make up more than 20 percent of the school's enrollment, and provided the lab school makes reasonable efforts in the subsequent recruitment process for the population of the school to reasonably reflect the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic composition of the general population of the students residing within the school district in which the school is located.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
ASU (K-5)	282	280	276	274

Of the 274 enrolled students for the 2021-22 school year, nearly 49 percent were male, 46 percent were Black, 37 percent were Hispanic, and 17 percent were classified as exceptional children. Most recent Title I data show that 68 percent of the Academy at Middle Fork students were designated as low-income. By comparison, 29 percent of the K-5 students in Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools were Black, 28 percent were Hispanic, and 62 percent were designated as low-income.

Achievement:

Per G.S. 116-239.9, laboratory schools are required to enroll students who were previously enrolled in an underperforming school or who were underperforming. Proficiency data—the percentage of students that meet a particular level of performance—needs to be interpreted in the context of this statutory requirement. Thankfully, the state also calculates achievement *growth*, which captures how much achievement improves from one year to the next regardless. In some instances, schools can meet growth targets even if proficiency rates remain below district or statewide averages.

Grade/Subject	Student Growth*		Proficiency Rates (Level 3 or above) *	
	2018-19	2020-21	2018-19	2020-21
3 rd Grade Reading	Met	Met	32.65	29.3
4 th Grade Reading	Met	Met	30.43	16.67
5 th Grade Reading	Exceeded	Met	20.83	22
Schoolwide: Reading	Met	Met	28	21.7
Winston Salem Forsyth: Reading			54	38
North Carolina Reading			58	46
3 rd Grade Math	Not Met	n/a**	28.57	7.1
4 th Grade Math	Met	n/a**	17.39	<5.00
5 th Grade Math	Met	Exceeded	20.83	26

Appalachian State Academy at Middle Fork

Schoolwide: Math	Met	Exceeded	22.4	11.8
Winston Salem Forsyth: Math			54	30
North Carolina: Math			59	40
5 th Grade Science	Met	Not Met	39.58	20
Schoolwide: Science	Met	Not Met	39.58	20
Winston Salem Forsyth: Science			73	55
North Carolina: Science			76	62
Overall School Growth	Met	Met		

*Due to COVID-19, growth and proficiency data is unavailable for 2019-20

**During the 2020-21 school year, growth was not reported for 3rd or 4th grade math because there was no baseline data

Note: Overall growth data not available at county or state level; calculated at school level only

Summary of Renewal Visit:

The renewal visit occurred on April 27, 2022. The review team consisted of a UNC System Office representative who previously administered a set of lab schools in another state, a retired North Carolina Principal of the Year, and the Executive Director of Educator Preparation and Lab Schools. During the visit, the review team met with university and school-level leaders, community partners including a parent, classroom teachers, and a representative from the partnering school district. The renewal visit consisted of an overview from the school provided to the team, a walk-through observation of classrooms, and two focus groups.

During the visit, the renewal team noted several areas where the Academy at Middle Fork is excelling. The school demonstrates a student-centered culture with a well-developed structure for addressing the social, emotional, and physical needs of the student population. Specifically, the Academy at Middle Fork's core values of *Honesty, Integrity, Kindness, and Excellence* (HIKE), help to sustain a behavior support system that reinforces the positive school culture and sense of community. In response to the unique needs of the academy's student population, the school has created additional positions to foster this school culture, including a full-time counselor, full-time nursing support, and a full-time speech teacher. Connections between the university, the school, and the partnering school district are strong, with established means of communication and demonstrated commitment to advancing the goals of the school.

The Academy at Middle Fork has made gains in academic achievement as demonstrated by the school moving from a grade of "F" on the state's school rating system prior to becoming a lab school to a "D" after the first year of operation as a lab school. COVID-19 interrupted the upward trajectory of proficiency as evidenced by lower rates across all content areas for 2020-21, but the school has employed strategies to accelerate student learning. One example is Orton Gillingham teacher training to provide intensive reading support for students most at risk for failure in literacy. To support students and educator candidates, the school hosts many pre-service teachers and, despite geographic challenges, has sought out new ways to foster this engagement.

The review team also identified specific areas for growth during the renewal visit. The team suggested more ambitious academic goals, especially in literacy, and noted that the school's goal of 5 percent growth on the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) should be more aggressive to ensure that all students read on grade level before middle school. The renewal team noted that, while there have been gains in proficiency, there are still many students not reading or performing on grade level, suggesting a need to continue to work towards grade level proficiency for all students. Based on reviews of student work and within classroom observations, the renewal team noted a need to complement the school's exemplary support for the social-emotional needs of students with a renewed push for rigor and increased expectations in academics.

The review team suggests that the school examine current literacy practices that best boost student literacy achievement, since data clearly demonstrate the connection between instruction and student outcomes. School

Appalachian State Academy at Middle Fork

leadership should work to integrate the Orton-Gillingham and Language Essential for Teaching Reading and Spelling (LETRS) professional learning the teachers have engaged in within the past year.

In sum, the review team believes that the Academy at Middle Fork is well positioned to positively impact the students who are enrolled in the school, utilizing evidence-based instructional methods within the nurturing school culture that faculty and staff have built. The review team recommends renewal of the school for an additional five years of operation.

AGENDA ITEM

A-3. Laboratory School Renewal: D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy.....Laura Bilbro-Berry

Situation: Pursuant to G.S. 116-239.7, a laboratory school shall operate for a period of five years. At the end of the initial five years of operation, the subcommittee shall renew the term of operation for additional five-year periods if the laboratory school is still located in a local school administrative unit that has 25 percent or more of its schools identified as low-performing under G.S. 115C-105.37, or if the subcommittee renews a waiver of this requirement. If the laboratory school is no longer (i) located in a qualifying local school administrative unit or (ii) meeting the purposes of this Article under a waiver at the end of five years, the subcommittee may renew the term of operation for additional five-year periods if the subcommittee finds the school is successfully meeting its mission to improve student performance and provide valuable exposure and training for teachers and principals in the constituent institution's educator preparation program.

Background: In partnership with New Hanover County Schools, in 2018 the University of North Carolina Wilmington opened D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy (DCVPA), the only K-8 school within the county. Instruction is offered on a year-round schedule and guided by the acronym PIER (Personalized, Inquiry-based, Experiential, and Reflective) and emphasizes STEM and literacy content. DCVPA is simultaneously focused on addressing the physical health and social-emotional needs of their students and uses a “kinship model” to facilitate relationship building between staff, families, and students.

The 2022-23 school year marks the fifth year of operation for D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy. UNC Wilmington is seeking a renewal period of five additional years to operate.

Assessment: A renewal report summarizing the progress of the school is presented for subcommittee review. The school will provide a brief presentation to outline its successes to date, describe plans, and propose renewal for an additional five years of operation.

Action: This item requires a vote by the committee.

D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy

The University of North Carolina Wilmington operates D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy (DCVPA), the only K-8 school within New Hanover County Schools. Located in downtown Wilmington's Northside community, the school opened in July 2018 and operates on a year-round calendar. DCVPA has one class per grade level in K-5 and two classes per grade level in sixth to eighth. Instruction at DCVPA is guided by the acronym PIER (Personalized, Inquiry-based, Experiential, and Reflective) and emphasizes STEM and literacy content. DCVPA is simultaneously focused on addressing the physical health and social-emotional needs of their students and uses a "kinship model" to facilitate relationship-building between staff, families, and students.

Enrollment:

Per G.S. 116-239.9, laboratory schools must be elementary and/or middle schools serving students between grades kindergarten and eighth. To be eligible to enroll, students must be zoned for a low-performing school (those receiving a performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of "met expected growth" or "not met expected growth" on the required state assessments) and/or be underperforming themselves on appropriate measures of academic performance. In 2020, the legislature created flexibility for lab schools to enroll students within the partnering school district that do not qualify under this eligibility criteria provided those students do not make up more than 20 percent of the school's enrollment, and provided the lab school makes reasonable efforts in the subsequent recruitment process for the population of the school to reasonably reflect the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic composition of the general population of the students residing within the school district in which the school is located.

	Enrollment			
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
DCV (K-8)	243	216	203	208

Of the students enrolled in 2021-22, 52 percent were male, 86 percent were Black, and 20 percent were classified as exceptional children. According to the most recent Title I data 100 percent of the D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy students are designated as low-income. By comparison, 18 percent of the K-8 students in New Hanover County Schools are Black and 64 percent are designated as low-income.

Achievement:

Per G.S. 116-239.9, laboratory schools are required to enroll students who were previously enrolled in an underperforming school or who were underperforming. Proficiency data—the percentage of students that meet a particular level of performance—need to be interpreted in the context of this statutory requirement. Thankfully, the state also calculates achievement *growth*, which captures how much achievement improves from one year to the next, which provides a measure of how much progress lab school students are making toward meeting proficiency benchmarks. Because of the statutory requirement to serve students from underperforming schools, it is not uncommon for lab schools to meet growth targets even if proficiency rates remain below district or statewide averages. For instance, the table below shows that DC Virgo met or exceeded expected student growth in math at every grade level though proficiency rates in math were lower than those districtwide.

D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy

Grade/Subject	Student Growth*		Proficiency Rates (Level 3 or Above)*	
	2018-19	2020-21	2018-19	2020-21
Reading				
3 rd Grade Reading	Met	Met	25	5
4 th Grade Reading	Not Met	Not Met	22.22	21.1
5 th Grade Reading	Met	Met	20	14.3
6 th Grade Reading	Not Met	Met	35.29	14.3
7 th Grade Reading	Met	Met	31.58	21.2
8 th Grade Reading	Met	Met	23.33	12.5
Schoolwide: Reading	Met	Not Met	27.4	16.7
New Hanover: Reading			64	51
North Carolina: Reading			58	46
Math				
3 rd Grade Math		n/a**	33.33	5
4 th Grade Math	Not Met	n/a**	5.56	10.5
5 th Grade Math	Met	Met	44	7.1
6 th Grade Math	Met	Met	38.24	7.1
7 th Grade Math	Met	Met	15.79	<5.00
8 th Grade Math	Met	Exceeds	16.67	12.5
Schoolwide: Math	Met	Met	13.4	7.5
New Hanover: Math			66	46
North Carolina: Math			59	40
Science				
5 th Grade Science	Met	Not Met	56	14.3
8 th Grade Science	Met	Not Met	56.67	40.6
Schoolwide: Science	Met	Not Met	81	67
New Hanover: Science			81	67
North Carolina: Science			76	62
Overall School Growth	Not Met	Met		

*Due to COVID-19, growth and proficiency data is unavailable for 2019-20

**During the 2020-21 school year, growth was not reported for 3rd or 4th grade math because there was no baseline data

Note: Overall growth data not available at county or state level; calculated at school level only

D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy

Summary of Renewal Visit:

A team of System Office staff and other expert volunteers conducted a renewal visit on May 2, 2022. The review team consisted of a UNC System Office representative who previously administered a set of charter schools in another state, a retired North Carolina Principal of the Year, a program administrator from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Office of Charter Schools, and the Executive Director of Educator Preparation and Lab Schools. During the visit, the review team met with university and school-level leaders, community partners including parents, classroom teachers, and the superintendent from the partnering school district. The renewal visit consisted of an overview by school leadership, a walk-through observation of classrooms, and two focus groups.

During the visit, the renewal team noted several areas where D.C. Virgo is positively addressing the academic and social-emotional needs of their student body. D.C. Virgo has made gains in student growth through embracing innovation. The year-round approach appears to be beneficial to the students and their families. Of note is the focus on health and wellbeing which is embedded into activities at the school. The ethic of care and community is strong at D.C. Virgo such that it is truly a community-based school. A wide variety of partners exist to support the school to include university and community-based partners. A notable example is a local pastor/city councilman serving as a daily morning car greeter. The partnerships for swimming and gardening along with the volunteer-led Friday club activities further enhance the overall culture of the school.

D.C. Virgo's attention to the social-emotional well-being of students is a strength for the school. The school has a strong student support team focused on individualized responses. Strategies to de-escalate student behavior challenges are effective. The renewal visit team heard directly from students who were able to explain how restorative practices work at the school and how those practices have helped them individually. Proximity to the university allows for a strong presence on the lab school campus. Examples include:

- The Watson College of Education hosting pre-service educator preparation classes at the school.
- During COVID, a PhD student to start a mycology/fungi project on campus with EC students, who then led their peers in the new learning.
- Faculty and school staff have collaborated to co-author research articles based on their experience at DC Virgo.

College and university faculty are heavily invested in the school, and it shows. Senior and unit level leaders at the university demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of the school. The associate dean and other university faculty/staff are on campus frequently. In addition, a strong partnership exists between the school and the LEA. The New Hanover County Schools superintendent was present for most of the renewal visit and spoke in favor of the partnership. Finally, clear systems and processes are in place for fiscal and operational support.

During the renewal visit, the team also identified areas where D.C. Virgo can improve. D.C. Virgo has made great strides in addressing the whole child with their social-emotional supports and high levels of community engagement. However, there are gaps between strategies employed and academic outcomes. The school culture is very positive; a strong school leader is in place; and growth is evident. However, greater acceleration toward proficiency is needed. The renewal team identified the need for increased attention to and intentionality around the implementation of pedagogical strategies and curriculum that yields results. While there is clear evidence of achievement growth, that growth needs to be accelerated for more students to reach proficiency and for school-wide proficiency to increase. Attention to strategies that are leading to growth/proficiency so

D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy

they can be replicated across grade levels and content areas is suggested. During the visit, the principal clearly articulated this need as a priority goal for the next five years.

In sum, the review team believes that D.C. Virgo is positioned to combine its already-strong university/community partnerships and the extensive attention to students' social-emotional needs with a laser focus on implementing curriculum and instructional practices that accelerate academic growth and grade-level proficiency. The review team recommends renewal of the school for an additional five years of operation.

AGENDA ITEM

A-4. Standards for Establishing Certain Costs for Laboratory Schools.....Laura Bilbro-Berry

Situation: Pursuant to G.S. 116-239.8(b)(4), the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina System and the State Board of Education shall jointly determine standards for establishing the costs to local school administrative units of providing facilities and services required to operate and maintain a laboratory school, including facilities, transportation, food services, and student support services a laboratory school might request.

Background: Pursuant to the statute, System Office staff entered negotiations with legal counsel for the State Board of Education to create a set of standards for the costs of facility lease and operations, transportation, school nutrition, and support services that shall be reflected in future lease agreements and memorandums of agreement for the operation of a laboratory school between lab schools and their local education agency (LEA) partners.

Assessment: The proposed standards were developed collaboratively with State Board of Education staff in response to a statutory requirement. To fulfill that requirement, it is recommended that the standards presented be adopted by subcommittee vote.

Action: This item requires a vote by the committee.

Standards for Establishing Certain Costs for Laboratory Schools

The standards for establishing the costs to local school administrative units ("Local Education Authority" or "LEA") for providing the facilities and services for the operations and maintenance of laboratory schools ("lab schools") are as follows:

Facilities and Leases

Leases must be based on price per square foot and incorporate the cost of the outstanding debt service for the facility. The price should be derived from negotiations between the Local Education Authority and the lab school, provided the cost may not exceed the median per square foot price for similar property in the local market, as derived by a broker price opinion or comparative market analysis done per N.C.G.S. 93A-83.

Transportation

If a lab school requests LEA-provided transportation for their students to and from school, then transportation should be provided by the LEA at no cost to the lab school. For the purposes of the State Public School Fund (SPSF) allotment for student transportation funding, the lab school's students will be considered part of LEA-provided transportation. If there are excess costs due to program structure or dates of operation, the LEA may request contingency funding be afforded in the SPSF allotment for student transportation to offset these uncustomary expenditures.

Further, should the lab school request extra-curricular transportation and educational field trip transportation be provided, the LEA shall provide it in the same manner as it does for other schools in the unit, but may recover the average cost per mile to maintain school activity buses in their district in the prior year plus any actual driver or insurance costs as well as capital depreciation.

School Nutrition Services

If a lab school qualifies for the National School Lunch program and requests that the Local Education Authority in which it resides administer the program for the lab school, the associated costs for school nutrition services may be negotiated, but in no event shall such costs exceed the rates paid by similar public school units in the LEA in which the lab school is located.

Student Support Services

Costs must be actual costs for personnel and time incurred per the local market for those services.

Note: This is guidance on cost only and does not address other issues including but not limited to, apportionment of liability or logistical and operational matters. Those matters must be addressed through agreements between the parties. Agreements concerning all matters, including costs, must account for and be compliant with all applicable laws and regulations.