



LOUDOUN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
21000 Education Court
Ashburn, Virginia 20148

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

March 12, 2014

Mr. Christian N. Braunlich
President
Virginia Board of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Dear Mr. Braunlich:

On behalf of Loudoun County School Board, I am writing to request that the State Board of Education consider and approve at its earliest convenience the enclosed waiver so as to permit the opening of the Middleburg Community Charter School on August 4, 2014, which is prior to Labor Day and to allow for an extended school year. To the best of my knowledge, the Middleburg Community Charter School, that was recently approved (with conditions) will be the first public charter school in Northern Virginia and only the second elementary charter school in the Commonwealth.

The Middleburg Community Charter School charter application was submitted to the Loudoun County School Board on August 13, 2013, and the School Board voted on September 10, 2013, to initiate the application subject to subsequent review and approval by the School Board.

At the meeting of February 11, 2014, the School Board, after having issuing prior statutory notice, received public comment and input concerning the application. In addition, a Select Committee of the School Board held public meetings and took public input concerning the application, considered and discussed the application and reported to the School Board at the February 11, 2014, School Board meeting.

The School Board gave further consideration to the application at its meeting of February 25, 2014, and at its Work Session on February 26, 2014. At the March 4, 2014, School Board meeting, the School Board conditionally approved the application for a conversion charter school subject to the negotiation of a charter school contract and lease upon the terms expressed by the School Board and also approved the State Waiver Request.

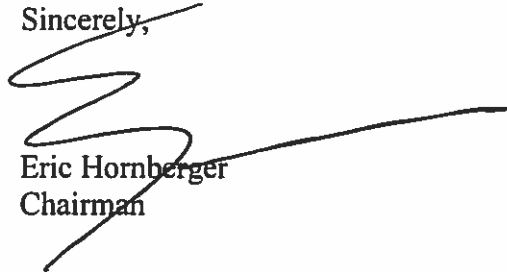
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The charter school will:

- operate on a modified school year calendar, shortening summer learning loss and increasing learning time for students during fall and spring intercessions resulting in continuous learning throughout the year.
- offer multi-age/grade interdisciplinary learning with quarterly thematic units to help bring students to a new awareness of the meaningful connections that exist among the disciplines. The thematic units will present content, skills and thinking processes, and assessments through the exploration of connections among the disciplines.
- connect professional learning with the school calendar by offering professional learning during early release days, thus, reducing the days teachers are away from instructional time.
- provide block planning time for weekly Professional Learning Communities focused on student achievement and professional growth.
- be located in the current facility of the Middleburg Elementary School within the Town of Middleburg that has been the location of a continuously operating public elementary school for well over a hundred years.

Once the charter school contract and lease have been signed, I will forward those documents to you for your information and background. The Loudoun County School Board believes that this charter school will serve well the education of the students located in a rural area of our school division. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Eric Hornberger
Chairman

Enclosure

1. State Waiver Request

cc: Dr. Patricia I. Wright, Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction
Dr. Edgar B. Hatrick, III, Division Superintendent
Mr. David Quanbeck. Applicant

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

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

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

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

SCHOOL DIVISION Loudoun County School Division

TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY Modified School Year Calendar-2014-15

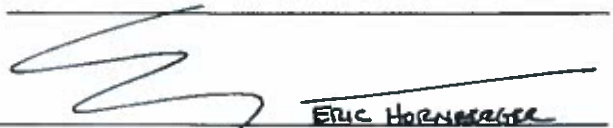
TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:

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

SCHOOL OR SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED PROGRAM/ACTIVITY

Middleburg Community Charter School

March 4, 2014
Date Approved
by the Local School Board


Signature
Chairman of the School Board

3/14/14
Submission Date


Signature
Division Superintendent

SCHOOL DIVISION Loudoun County School Division

TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY Middleburg Community Charter School with a Modified School Year Calendar

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

This request is for an approval for the Middleburg Community Charter School to open school prior to Labor Day. The waiver request is based upon academic reasons to help the school meet federal and state standards.

The school will:

- operate on a Modified school year calendar, shortening summer learning loss and increasing learning time for students during fall and spring intercessions resulting in continuous learning throughout the year.
- offer multi-age/grade interdisciplinary learning with quarterly thematic units to help bring students to a new awareness of the meaningful connections that exist among the disciplines. The thematic units will present content, skills and thinking processes, and assessments through the exploration of connections among the disciplines.
- connect professional learning with the school calendar by offering professional learning during early release days, thus, reducing the days teachers are away from instructional time.
- provide block planning time for weekly Professional Learning Communities focused on student achievement and professional growth.

Middleburg Elementary School experiences ongoing School Board discussions about the closure of the school as a result of low enrollment. The enrollment has been reduced to 59 students; whereas the building capacity is 137. There is a rich history and tradition to Middleburg Elementary School; however, many families in the community choose not to attend because of the constant discussions about closing the school. With community and parent support, the Loudoun County Public School has approved the community's application to open Middleburg Community Charter School in the 2014-15 school year.

The creation of the Middleburg Community Charter School with a modified school year calendar meets Loudoun County and Middleburg Community's need for a community based elementary school that develops the whole child, promotes diversity, and levels economic barriers through innovative education approaches that have proven successful in other states and school systems. Currently, the student population includes 19 percent Blacks, 32 percent Hispanic, and 49 percent White. Fifty-five percent of Middleburg Elementary School students are eligible for free and reduced price meals. The Middleburg Community Charter School plans to continue to educate the current student population as well as other students in the county seeking enrollment in the charter school.

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

X YES NO.

IF YES, EXPLAIN WHY.

Section 22.1-79.1 of the Code of Virginia prohibits local school boards from adopting a school calendar that requires schools to open prior to Labor Day unless a waiver is granted by the Virginia Board of Education for "good cause." The conditions under which the State Board of Education may grant such waivers are outlined in the Code. The School Board of Loudoun County Public Schools is requesting a waiver for Middleburg Community Charter School to open school prior to Labor Day. Approval of the request will allow the charter school to operate under a modified school year calendar, opening August 4, 2014, thus, shortening summer learning loss and providing continuous learning throughout the year.

The approval of a year round school year calendar will result in the following for students and the entire school learning community:

- Increased learning time for students
- Continuous learning throughout the year
- Shortened summer learning loss
- Increased professional learning for instructional staff
- Remediation/pre-teach concepts/accelerate learning immediately following 1st and 3rd grading periods during inter sessions

The year round calendar with intersession breaks will require Middleburg Community Charter School to open prior to Labor Day, more specifically-August 4, 2014. (Please see the calendar attached.)

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.

This program is not experimental. It is an innovative way to deliver instruction throughout the year resulting in continuous learning.

The uniqueness of this request is to move from a traditional calendar to a modified school year calendar, opening school in August instead of after Labor Day. The instructional program will be delivered in multi-grade interdisciplinary yearly thematic units continuing to emphasize the standards of learning through a rigorous and engaging curriculum. Students will be evaluated through both formative and summative assessments. Data results will drive the instructional program thus resulting in improved student achievement. The Early Release days built into the modified school year calendar will afford teachers professional development opportunities to address best practices to meet the needs of all students.

DESCRIBE THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAM FOR EACH SCHOOL.

With the implementation of the modified school year calendar, Middleburg Community Charter School anticipates and expects increased student achievement for all students using ongoing and quarterly assessments. The student data will drive the delivery of instruction including adjustments as needed. The school will be fully accredited and meet or exceed the AMO requirements for the 2014-15 school year. Additionally, during the professional learning days and weekly PLCs, the instructional staff will enhance their knowledge and skills in delivering the core curriculum, resulting in rigorous and engaging learning for the students.

Using the following assessments and the VDOE Standards of Learning to guide the instructional program, students will be assessed at the beginning, quarterly, and end of each school year to measure academic growth.

- PALS (Fall, Winter, Spring)
- Writing Samples (Fall, Winter, Spring)
- DRA
- Quarterly Benchmark Assessments in Math and Reading
- Content quizzes and tests
- Student portfolios

Surveys will be conducted to assess the opinions of the staff, family, and community. Results of the student assessments and surveys will guide the school staff in developing the yearly school improvement plan.

Middleburg Community Charter School

2014-2015

July 2014						
SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
		SB	SB	SB	SB	5
6	SB	SB	SB	SB	SB	12
13	SB	SB	SB	SB	SB	19
20	SB	SB	SP	SB	▽	26
27	▽	▽	TW	TW		

August 2014						
SU	MO	TU	W	TH	FR	SA
					TW	2
3	♥	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	BTS	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	P/T	P/T	30
31						

September 2014						
SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
	H	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October 2014						
SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
			MC	2	GP	4
5	I	I	I	I	I	11
12	H	I	I	I	I	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November 2014						
SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
						1
2	▽	▽	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	H	H	H	29
30						

December 2014						
SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	MC	18	19	20
21	GP	H	H	H	H	27
28	H	H	H			

January 2015						
SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
				H	H	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	H	20	21	22	23	24
25	P/T	27	28	29	30	31

February 2015						
SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7						
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	H	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2015						
SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7						
8	9	10	MC	12	13	14
15	I	I	I	I	I	21
22	I	I	I	I	I	28
29	H	H				

April 2015						
SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
			H	H	H	4
5	GP	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May 2015						
SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	H	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June 2015						
SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
	1	2	MC	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	♥	TW	TW	SB	20
21	SB	SB	SB	SB	SB	27
28	SB	SB				

Yellow = Days students are in school/ Amarillo = Hay Escuela.

Students in school
Dia de clases

Summer Break - School Closed
Vacacion del verano-Escuela cerrada

Intersession/optional enrollment
Intersesion/optional enrollment

GPD = Grade Preparation Day
No school/ No hay Escuela

No School-Vacation Day
No hay clases-vacacions

Middleburg Learning Day and Night

Teacher Work Day
Dia de trabajo para maestros

Back to school night
Noche de Bienvenida a la Escuela

Parent/Teacher Conferences-Students in School
Conferencias de padres y maestros

Teacher Inservice/no school
Servicio para profesoras

First/Last Days of School
Primer/Ultimo dia de escuela

Parent/Teacher Conferences-No School