

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P. O. Box 2120

Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

**HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM INNOVATION
PLANNING GRANT**

PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

Name: Lead School Division and Superintendent	Salem City Schools, Dr. H. Alan Seibert
Name: Consortium School Division(s)* (if applicable)	
Name: Participating High School(s)	Salem High School
Name: Division Contact Person - Planning Grant Director	Curtis Hicks
Title:	Assistant Superintendent
Mailing Address:	510 South College Ave
City/Zip	24153/
Telephone:	5403890130
E-mail:	chicks@salem.k12.va.us
Project Title:	Personalized Learning: Connecting Students to Their Future
Innovations:	Student Centered Career Pathways, Competency-Based Learning, Innovative Learning Environment, Community-Based Credit Opportunities
Total of HSPI funds requested:	\$ 50,000

CERTIFICATION BY OFFICIAL

The applicant certifies that to the best of his/her knowledge the information in this application is correct, that the filing of this application is duly authorized by the governing body of this School Division and that the applicant will comply with the attached Statement of Assurances.

Dr. H. Alan Seibert

Superintendent

Typed, or Printed Name of Authorized Official

Title:


Signature of Authorized Official

5/29/15

Date

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM INNOVATION PLANNING GRANT

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

Should an award of funds from the High School Program Innovation planning grant be made to the applicant(s)* in support of the activities proposed in this application, the authorized signatures below certify to the Virginia Department of Education that the authorized school division officials will:

1. Upon request, provide the Virginia Department of Education with access to records and other sources of information that may be necessary to determine compliance with appropriate federal and state laws and regulations;
2. Conduct educational activities funded by this project in compliance with the following federal laws:
 - a. Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001;
 - b. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
 - c. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972;
 - d. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
 - e. Age Discrimination Act of 1975; and
 - f. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
3. Use grant funds to **supplement** and **not supplant** funds from nonfederal sources;
4. Take into account during the development of programming, the need for greater access to and participation by students from historically underrepresented and underserved groups;
5. Submit, in accordance with stated guidelines and deadlines, all program and evaluation reports required by the Virginia Department of Education;
6. Ensure that at least 75 percent of the professional staff at each high school participating in this proposal is in agreement with implementing the innovations as a threshold requirement of pursuing this grant;
7. Ensure that the majority of the local school board is fully supportive of the multi-year effort for innovation; and
8. Upon review of and approval by the local school board and negotiation of acceptable and pertinent waiver requests, if any, made to the Virginia Board of Education, pursue implementation of the developed plan resulting from this High School Program Innovation planning grant for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years.

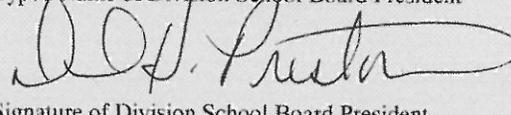
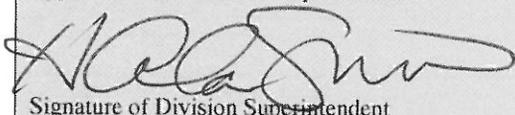
By signing and submitting this Statement of Assurances, the applicant school division assures that its participating high school(s) will adhere to state and federal laws and regulations governing public schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia, with the exception of any waivers that may be approved by the Virginia Board of Education at a future date. The applicant school division further certifies, to the best of its knowledge, that the submitted proposal has addressed all required elements of the High School Program Innovation planning grant RFP and the applicant understands and will comply with the assurances.

Dr. H. Alan Seibert

David Preston

Typed Name of Division Superintendent

Typed Name of Division School Board President



Signature of Division Superintendent

Signature of Division School Board President

Date 5/29/15

Date 5/29/15

*A Statement of Assurances page is required for each participating school division. The signed Statement of Assurances page for the lead school division will follow the Proposal Cover Page in the submitted proposal packet. Other participating school divisions' Statement of Assurances pages, if any, must be included as **Appendix D** of the proposal.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM INNOVATION PLANNING GRANT ABSTRACT PAGE

A.3 Abstract

The Salem City School Division, Salem High School, and the Salem Community have a history of collaboration and innovation. Continuing in that vein, the Division is now applying for a High School Program Innovation Planning Grant to engage teachers, students, parents, and community stakeholders in the planning and development of innovations that will transform secondary education, ultimately resulting in greater levels of engagement, academic success, and postsecondary preparation for all students.

The primary goals and objectives involve students and other stakeholders being better prepared for postsecondary education, training, and employment. While most stakeholders agree that Salem High is doing an excellent job of preparing students for postsecondary education, there is a definite perception that students are not as well-prepared for employment and careers. This perception seems to be connected to the sentiment that current graduation requirements allow little room for the customization and personalization necessary to meet individual learner needs.

Salem's plan is to investigate the creation of personalized learning opportunities centered around Career Pathways. In order to fully explore their Career Pathways of choice, students will need alternate or additional opportunities to obtain credits, including asynchronous learning, proficiency-based credit attainment, alternative scheduling, and workplace-based learning. To plan appropriately, Salem High will rely heavily on existing partnerships with local industry and educational institutions. While creating a more personalized system of instruction will require a significant break from the traditional high school model, the result should be programs of study that better engage students and better prepare students for their postsecondary lives, so that every student graduates with a diploma and a plan for future employment.

Baseline data on stakeholder perception was collected in May of 2015. Success will be measured in part by continuing to gauge stakeholder perception via similar survey instruments and comparing that data to the baseline as new innovations are implemented. A highly-participatory process that leads to meaningful teacher-created innovations implemented with fidelity will further illustrate program success.

The planning grant and the implementation of the recommended innovations will be overseen by a combination of division-level and school-based administrators working in conjunction with the members of the school's existing, teacher-led Personalized Learning Committee. Ultimately, decisions regarding curriculum changes, alternative scheduling, community partnerships, and policy changes will be recommended to the Salem City School Board for approval. These recommendations will be based on input and involvement from the high school's highly competent and extremely professional staff of teachers and counselors, parents, students, and representatives from business, industry, and postsecondary education.

B.1 Rationale for Change

The environment at Salem High School, the lone high school for the Salem City School Division, will provide fertile ground for planning, testing, and implementing the program innovations encouraged by the Department of Education's High School Program Innovation Planning Grant.

Over the course of the past several years, it has become increasingly apparent that the school division, the school, and the community desire a more innovative and personalized instructional program coupled with the more flexible structures needed to support such a program. For example:

- International Baccalaureate students and their parents regularly lament the fact that such a rigorous and prescribed course of study prevents students from fully exploring the many electives and non-IB courses that SHS offers.
- Many of Salem's Career and Technical Education completer students would like to pursue additional CTE programs but are prevented from doing so by having to meet generic graduation requirements.
- With increasing frequency, Salem High School students are choosing to take advantage of alternative means of earning credits in order to create additional room in their schedules to experience more academic and elective courses during the regular school day. These include online Health, online Economics, and after-school PE during the school year, as well as online Personal Finance, English, Government, Health, and PE at the local YMCA during the summer.
- Local businesses and organizations, including the Workforce Investment Board, the Virginia Western Community College Manufacturing Summit, and the Salem/Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce, are informing the Division that they would like to see students have additional time for more CTE experiences and workplace readiness training.

What has become apparent through the above-mentioned anecdotal data has now been supported quantitatively as a result of a recent survey of stakeholders. In May 2015, Salem students, parents, and community members were given a chance to reply to an Innovation Survey. The survey was sent electronically to all parents in the school system and all students at the high school. It was also posted for the general public via social media.

405 individuals chose to respond to the Innovation Survey. 50% of respondents identified themselves as Parents, while 18.8% identified themselves as Students, and 27.7% were Staff. The remaining respondents were from local business/industry, postsecondary education/training, or other.

Survey respondents were not informed prior to the survey as to the specifics of innovations being considered by Salem High School. The goal of the survey was to get a big picture feel for whether the Salem community felt there was room for Salem High to improve and whether or not the community felt innovations, in general, were in order. This survey also provided baseline

data that will be used in future years to help the Division determine whether or not it has met the goals and objectives of this proposal.

Based on the results of the survey, it is clear that the Salem community is very pleased with how well Salem High School prepares students for postsecondary education. 90% of respondents agreed that the school is doing an adequate job in that area. That Salem High School would receive such a high approval rating is not surprising, as historical climate data reveals that 90% or more of the Salem community approves and supports the work of Salem High School.

However, the survey data indicate that there are areas where Salem High School can improve. 75.9% agreed that SHS is adequately preparing students for postsecondary training, 71.3% agreed that SHS is adequately preparing students for postsecondary employment, and 72.2% agreed that SHS offers a wide range of courses and programs to help students explore careers of interest. This departure from approval ratings that are typically close to 90% illustrates a perceived need for the types of innovations outlined in this proposal, innovations that will better prepare students for careers.

The Innovation Survey highlighted a general consensus that SHS could do more to prepare students for an array of postsecondary opportunities, especially in the area of careers. Ideally, the Salem community would have more consistent agreement regarding how well Salem prepares students for all postsecondary paths. One goal of this grant is to increase the percentage of respondents who agree that SHS is adequately preparing students for postsecondary education, training, and employment to 95%.

The Innovation Survey also showed a general consensus that more innovative approaches to credit attainment are supported by the community. Specifically:

- 91.8% would like to see more classes directly related to individual career interests,
- 93.3% would like to see more workplace learning experiences related to individual career interests,
- 91.5% would support the general concept of “testing out” of certain graduation requirements by demonstrating proficiency,
- 88.8% would support the general concept of providing an individualized approach to the amount of time it takes a student to complete a course, and
- 85.8% would support the general concept of individualized graduation requirements based on student-selected Career Pathways.

While this survey did not address specific innovations outlined in the grant proposal, the data collected does depict a school community that is open to innovation and that is generally inclined to support the types of innovations encouraged by this grant. This mindset of innovation and continuous improvement is the norm in the Salem City School Division and in the Salem community, and Salem High School has a history of implementing innovations that make school more engaging and meaningful for students.

In recent years, Salem High School has piloted the use of a variety of innovative structures to create a more personalized learning environment. The investigation and implementation of these measures have made Salem a place ready for growth and innovation.

Specifically, Salem High School has:

- through a 2014-15 book study, explored the concept of Mass Customized Learning as outlined and described in the book *Inevitable: Mass Customized Learning in the Age of Empowerment* by Charles Schwahn and Beatrice McGarvey,
- established a teacher-led Personalized Learning Committee that has researched how the personalization of instruction might benefit Salem students,
- created an online Personalized Learning discussion forum and resource website which can be found at <http://personalizedlearningshs.weebly.com/>,
- in May 2014, sent teachers along with division representatives to Lindsay, CA to learn more about their efforts to implement the mass customized learning concepts outlined in *Inevitable*,
- in April 2015, visited Glenn Oak High School in Canton, OH, Reynoldsburg eStem Academy in Reynoldsburg, OH, and Metro Early College High School in Columbus, OH to research how other schools are providing students with access to alternative methods of earning credits, additional college credits, and personalized Career Pathways,
- contacted schools in Eminence and Danville, KY to learn how high schools in a state with more flexible scheduling options are providing students with more personalized and meaningful learning experiences,
- in April 2010, visited newly renovated schools throughout Virginia and met with an innovation and design team from Penn State University to discuss how to construct classrooms that enable teachers to better meet individual learning needs of students,
- created additional course offerings and credit attainment methods that allow students to create more flexible and personalized programs of study, including those listed on Page 1, as well as the use of APEX Learning to allow students to attain credits and recover from poor academic decisions, and
- piloted an innovative and alternative evaluation process and teacher compensation plan through the school's Growth Project and implementation of a VDOE Strategic Compensation Grant.

This anecdotal and quantitative data coupled with these experiences highlight Salem High School's capacity for innovation and growth. They are also evidence that there is a desire within the Salem community for innovations that enable students to explore more options while in high school in order to become better prepared for careers, and provide a more personalized high school experience.

B.2 Impediments to Innovation

The High School Program Innovation Planning Grant has the potential to greatly advance the quality of education in our Commonwealth, especially if it helps remove some of the inherent impediments to innovation. As Salem High School makes plans to provide a more personalized and meaningful experience for its students, these impediments are becoming more apparent. The impediments to innovation recognized by Salem educators are:

1. Seat time requirements
 - o Current seat time requirements prevent students from completing courses at their own pace even if that pace more appropriately matches their ability level and their learning. This makes it difficult for students to go beyond the basic survey courses to experience more in-depth learning opportunities.
2. Lack of alternate means of verifying content mastery
 - o Currently course credit can only be verified after requisite seat hours have been met and/or by passing an end-of-course SOL test. If students could test out of classes, or if there were additional opportunities to demonstrate proficiency, students could potentially move at a faster pace, accrue more credits, and take additional classes in Career Pathways that match their interests, aptitude and goals.
3. Highly prescriptive graduation requirements
 - o Current diploma options and the graduation requirements for each option do not provide for much variety in the courses students will ultimately take in order to graduate. As a general rule, most students in Virginia take the same high school curriculum while fitting in a few electives of their choice. If graduation requirements varied depending on a student's Career Pathway, additional personalized options could be pursued.
4. Limited course offerings
 - o High schools in Virginia are limited by the course offerings currently approved by the Department of Education. In order for schools to offer a more personalized course of study, schools will need authorization to be creative in how they assign credit and for what they assign credit.
5. Teacher licensure requirements
 - o Understandably, teacher licensure requirements are strict. However, as schools seek to provide students with additional and more personalized course offerings, internships, and independent studies, it will be necessary for flexibility to allow schools to meet the needs of students.
6. Course sequencing requirements at the local level
 - o Some of Salem's own course sequence requirements and prerequisites prevent students from following more personalized paths of study. The Division will need to investigate altering these requirements to allow students to place out of certain courses.
7. Access to high quality alternate modes of instruction
 - o In order for students to have more personalized experiences they will need access to alternate means of learning besides the traditional classroom. Online courses are one potential example of an alternate mode; however, the quality of such courses is often suspect. While individual schools and divisions might create these alternate modes, the more invested the state is in providing high quality alternatives, the more personalized the learning experiences in Virginia can become.
8. 4 year limitation on high school
 - o Currently the vast majority of a student's credits must be earned within the traditional 4 years of high school. This prevents students who experience

difficulty from having the time they need to master content and prevents successful students from experiencing a truly enriching curriculum. As students are allowed to earn credits prior to the start of ninth grade and continue earning them beyond the twelfth grade, they will experience learning at a more personalized level.

9. Post-Labor Day start
 - o A more flexible school calendar will enable school divisions to provide a more personalized learning experience. However, the current mandated post-Labor Day start prevents a school system from maximizing the potential of the summer months.
10. Number of available credit-bearing internships and work-based learning experiences
 - o A personalized learning experience that connects to a Career Pathway should include work experiences, internships, and job shadowing opportunities. It will be problematic if these are not available, not meaningful, and not for credit.
11. Teacher contracted workload
 - o As additional personalized learning experiences are created it may result in the need for teachers to teach more classes than they are currently allowed under the parameters for teacher workload. Teachers could end up teaching traditional classes, overseeing internships and capstone projects, and monitoring students' online progress, the combination of which might not fit within current guidelines.

Based on the impediments to innovation identified above, the Salem City School Division may request waivers that would enable the Division to:

- eliminate seat time requirements,
- adopt alternative means of verifying course content mastery,
- better individualize graduation requirements based on Career Pathways,
- utilize highly qualified instructors who do not meet current licensure requirements,
- start instruction prior to the mandated post Labor Day start, and
- allow teachers greater flexibility in the number and types of courses they teach.

B.3 Goals and Objectives

Salem High School's plan for innovative and personalized learning will have five specific and measurable goals. Each of those goals aligns with the intent of the issued Request for Proposals.

Those goals are:

1. By September 15, 2017, as a result of Salem High School's plan for personalized learning, all tenth grade students will have selected a Career Pathway that aligns with their personal interests, aptitude, and goals.
 - a. This objective will be evidenced by both the creation of Career Pathways based on the 16 Career Clusters and by students having a self-selected Career Pathway recorded in our Student Information System database.
 - b. This Career Pathway will lead to a comprehensive and personalized course of study that enables them to fully explore that Pathway and benefit from the courses associated with it.

- c. This goal will motivate students through personalized learning.
 - d. This goal will enable Salem High School students to demonstrate mastery of content as well as career readiness skills.
 - e. This goal will result in ‘real-world’ connections that promote alignment with community workforce needs and emphasize transition to college and/or career.
2. By January 15, 2018, Salem High School’s plan for personalized learning will increase the number of internship and job shadowing opportunities available to students and increase in the number and percentage of students participating in an internship and/or job shadowing.
 - a. This objective will be evidenced by a list of available internships and job shadowing opportunities along with student participation data compared to baseline data collected by January 15, 2016.
 - b. This goal will motivate students through personalized learning.
 - c. This goal will enable Salem High School students to demonstrate mastery of content as well as career readiness skills.
 - d. This goal will result in ‘real-world’ connections that promote alignment with community workforce needs and emphasize transition to college and/or career.
 3. By April 15, 2018, $\geq 95\%$ of stakeholders will indicate that Salem High School adequately prepares students for postsecondary education, postsecondary training, and postsecondary employment.
 - a. This will be evidenced by feedback received from surveys of stakeholders.
 - b. Meeting this goal will be evidence that Salem High School’s personalized learning program is enabling students to demonstrate mastery of content as well as career readiness skills.
 - c. Meeting this goal will be evidence that Salem High School’s personalized learning program is resulting in ‘real-world’ connections that promote alignment with community workforce needs and emphasize transition to college and/or career.
 4. By April 15, 2018, $\geq 95\%$ of stakeholders will agree that Salem High School offers a wide range of courses/programs that provide students with opportunities to explore careers and career clusters of interest.
 - a. This will be evidenced by feedback received from surveys of stakeholders.
 - b. Meeting this goal will be evidence that Salem High School’s personalized learning program is enabling students to demonstrate mastery of content as well as career readiness skills.
 - c. Meeting this goal will be evidence that Salem High School’s personalized learning program is resulting in ‘real-world’ connections that promote alignment with community workforce needs and emphasize transition to college and/or career.
 5. By April 15, 2018, $\geq 90\%$ of students will receive college credit and/or take college-level courses in the areas of the personalized interests.
 - a. This goal will be evidenced by enrollment data kept in the school’s Counseling Office.
 - b. Currently, approximately 70% of students take a course for college credit or a college-level course while in high school.

- c. Meeting this goal will be evidence that Salem High School’s personalized learning program is resulting in ‘real-world’ connections that promote alignment with community workforce needs and emphasize transition to college and/or career.

B.4 Targeted Program Innovations

The Salem City School Division has taken steps to learn more about the impact of 21st century learning tools on K-12 education, and how these tools might lead to innovations that create customized learning experiences for students. This has included the study of the books *Disrupting Class* by Clayton M. Christensen and the aforementioned *Inevitable: Mass Customized Learning in the Age of Empowerment* by Charles Schwahn and Beatrice McGarvey, which both highlight the need for, and the benefits of, relevant, personalized learning opportunities with direct connections to college and career preparation, as well as the use of technology to provide these types of learning opportunities.

The concepts detailed in *Disrupting Class* and *Inevitable* led division representatives to visit the Lindsay Unified School District in Lindsay California, a school division highlighted in *Inevitable* for its efforts to create customized learning opportunities for its students using 21st Century technology. Division representatives have also visited the Ohio cities of Canton, Reynoldsburg, and Columbus to visit schools where concepts related to customized learning, Career Pathways, proficiency-based credit accrual, alternative scheduling models, work-based learning experiences, and business/college partnerships have been successfully integrated into secondary education. As a result, the Division has identified the following innovations to explore through the High School Program Innovation Planning Grant in order to expand our ability to provide a student-centered, personalized learning experience.

1. Career Pathways

The Division will work with teachers, community stakeholders and community business partners to develop Career Pathways that reflect the 16 career clusters and align to local, state, and national employment trends. These pathways will include programs available at Salem High School as well as learning opportunities available through postsecondary educational partners, business, and industry.

An article on the McREL International webpage, highlights the fact that career pathways provide several benefits to students, including reduced high school dropout rates, increased aspirations among students, increased college-going, improved transitions to workforce and postsecondary education, reduced remediation, and persistence in postsecondary education. The article also cites research that indicates that students who take CTE courses have better employment outcomes, feel more certain about their career direction, and can experience improved postsecondary outcomes if academic coursework is not sacrificed (Offenstein, Moore, & Shulock, 2009). In addition, high school CTE programs boast a completion rate of close to 90 percent—far higher than the 75 percent rate of U.S. high schools in general (Rich, 2011) or the 60 percent graduation rate of colleges (Schneider, 2010). <http://www.mcrel.org/about-us/hot-topics/ht-career-pathways#sthash.15aOnzoR.dpuf>

While the concept of Career Pathways is not new, the Division plans to incorporate a variety of unique innovations to expand on the use of pathways to create a relevant, personalized learning experience for students. The Division believes this will lead to higher student engagement and increase the percentage of students and parents who feel that Salem High School is adequately preparing students for postsecondary training and employment.

a. Pathway Specific Graduation Requirements

The current Standard Diploma and Advanced Studies Diploma options do not provide students with enough opportunities to explore elective and career-related courses of interest. For the most part there is very little variance in the courses selected and completed by most students. SHS will create Career Pathways with specific graduation requirements that emphasize the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue entry-level careers in the selected pathway, or to access postsecondary education and training that will lead to employment. Every student will graduate with a diploma and a plan for future employment.

b. Work-Based Learning Opportunities

The Salem City School Division is currently working with the Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce and Junior Achievement of Southwest Virginia to create a comprehensive Job Shadowing Program. The Division will work with local and regional business and industry partners to create meaningful job shadowing, internship, and apprenticeship opportunities for students in each of the Career Pathways.

The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition explains that, “Work-based learning has been shown to improve students’ self-esteem, to teach and reinforce basic academic and technical skills, to promote an understanding of workplace culture and expectations, and to develop a network for future job searches (Bailey & Hughes, 1999; Hoerner & Wehrley, 1995; Wehman, 2001).” NCSET states that students who participate in work-based learning:

- identify career interests, skills, and abilities;
- explore career goals;
- identify on-the-job support needs;
- develop employability skills and good work habits;
- gain an understanding of employer expectations;
- develop an understanding of the link between school and work;
- gain work experience, generally connected to a specific job function; and
- develop an understanding of the workplace and the connection between learning and earning.

c. Asynchronous Learning Opportunities

While each career pathway and its associated graduation requirements will be customized to focus on the knowledge and skills needed for related careers,

students will still be required to meet rigorous requirements in the core disciplines of reading, writing, science, history, civics, personal finance, and economics. Many of these survey courses will be available to students in an asynchronous environment, especially courses that are somewhat unrelated to the selected career pathway. This will allow students to complete many of their basic graduation requirements earlier so that they can explore more in-depth learning experiences in their junior and senior years of high school, similar to the “ready in 10” initiatives being implemented in other states around the country.

For example, a student who has selected a health sciences related pathway might have opportunities to complete history courses in an online environment in order to meet graduation requirements, while preserving valuable scheduling opportunities for advanced science courses or even off-site programs and work-based learning opportunities offered through a variety of community partners. Similarly, a student pursuing a pathway related to government or public service might participate in online science courses specifically designed for non-science related pathways so that he/she can spend more time in rigorous coursework more closely related to his/her selected pathway.

A recent whitepaper, “Educational Benefits of Online Learning,” produced by Blackboard© in conjunction with researchers from Cornell University outlined the following benefits of online learning:

- Enhanced student-to-student communication
- Enhanced teacher-to-student communication
- Enabling student-centered teaching approaches
- Providing 24/7 accessibility to course materials
- Providing just-in-time methods to assess and evaluate student progress
- Reducing faculty time spent on “administrivia”

2. Proficiency-Based Credit Accrual

In order to create even greater personalization and flexibility for students to customize their learning path, the Division will investigate opportunities to refocus learning outcomes around competencies that motivate students to apply knowledge, gain lasting understanding, and develop critical skills and dispositions for postsecondary education and training. The focus will be to find and/or create objective measures that allow students to earn credit by demonstrating their proficiency through assessments, projects, credentialing examinations, and performance tasks. These opportunities will be based on students’ acquisition of knowledge and skill as opposed to the completion of a required number of clock hours of instruction.

Over the past decade, the movement to adopt proficiency-based approaches to teaching, learning, and graduating has gained momentum throughout the country, as more educators, parents, business leaders, and elected officials recognize that high educational standards and strong academic preparation are essential to success in today's world.

With some parents wondering about the effects of proficiency-based learning the New England Secondary School Consortium reached out to higher education institutions throughout the northeast to gauge their support for the initiative.

In June, 2014 the consortium posted a press release highlighting the fact that 55 New England colleges and universities support stronger student preparation through proficiency based educational innovations. The press release explained that, “all of the public institutions of higher education in five New England states endorse innovative strategies for teaching today’s young adults.”

3. Non-Traditional Scheduling Options

While it is clear that the notion that every student needs the same amount of time to complete a course for high school credit is outdated, it is also clear that the traditional September-June school calendar no longer provides the flexibility and customization necessary to meet the needs of 21st century students.

As stated previously, the Salem City School Division has increased opportunities for students to complete courses during the summer months and during the school year based on their individual scheduling needs. The requests for these courses have steadily increased over the last three years. In fact, there were 359 non-traditional, or asynchronous course enrollments at Salem High School between June 2014 and May 2015, 226 during the summer and 133 during the traditional school term. This evidence suggests that students would benefit from additional opportunities through innovative scheduling.

The team of Salem educators who visited Metro High school in Columbus, Ohio this past April learned about Metro’s use of a J-Term to provide students with opportunities for remediation, enrichment, credit accrual, and workplace learning. Salem intends to investigate whether such a model could be used at Salem High School.

A simple description of the J-Term model is that a period of time would be set aside in January and possibly even June and/or July for students to catch up in courses where they have not appropriately mastered course content, get ahead by previewing rigorous course content that they will face during the second semester, gain additional credits by completing courses in a condensed time period, be enriched through opportunities for independent studies and/or project-based learning, or gain workplace experiences such as job shadowing or internships, some of which may include opportunities for credit.

4. Advanced Learning Opportunities

The innovations outlined above are all designed to provide students with the flexibility to customize their learning path to fit their unique interests and abilities. Specific graduation requirements based on the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the student-selected career pathway, along with opportunities to customize the pathway through proficiency-based credit accrual, asynchronous learning, and non-traditional scheduling options, should increase the pace at which students accumulate the necessary credits for program completion. With that in mind, the Division will work with business and

industry partners, college, university, and postsecondary training representatives, and teachers to create pathway-specific advanced-level learning opportunities. These opportunities might include, but are not limited to, high school credit-bearing courses, college courses, industry specific training opportunities, workplace learning experiences, and internships.

The innovations outlined above have the potential to create a highly personalized graduation path for each student with real-world connections that align with local, regional, and state workforce needs and that emphasize the transition to college and/or a career. Graduation requirements based on the knowledge and skills associated with student-selected Career Pathways, combined with proficiency-based credit accrual opportunities, flexible scheduling, asynchronous learning, and advanced, pathway-specific learning opportunities will increase engagement and achievement as students experience a high school program that is relevant and applicable to their future.

B.5 Coordination of Innovations

The innovations outlined in this proposal will ensure that all students pursue rigorous learning opportunities and demonstrate higher achievement, while both reducing the learning gaps associated with socioeconomic factors and better preparing students for postsecondary training and employment.

The Division will work with representatives from business, industry, and postsecondary education to develop Career Pathways that emphasize the knowledge and skills necessary for successful transition into college and/or a related career field. While the graduation requirements for each pathway will have clear connections to competencies associated with the specific career field, students will be expected to demonstrate proficiency on rigorous standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, civics, personal finance, and economics.

The innovations will also work together to provide a more flexible approach to the manner in which students acquire and demonstrate knowledge and skills. Specifically, the availability of asynchronous learning opportunities, proficiency-based credit, and non-traditional scheduling, will create more time for students who need additional support in a specific subject area or course. In addition, classroom instruction will be supported by meaningful workplace experiences that add relevance to course standards. These factors should lead to higher achievement for all students and reduce the learning gaps associated with socioeconomic factors.

Similarly, students who are ready to acquire knowledge and skills at a faster pace, or those who can demonstrate their proficiency through a variety of objective measures, will have opportunities to do so. This will create more time to pursue advanced courses and training, offered both at the high school level as well as through a variety of business and educational partners, which will better prepare students for postsecondary training and employment.

B.6 Planning Grant Timeline

1. July 2015
 - a. School administration, counselors, school-based Personalized Learning Committee, and Central Office Instructional Staff will identify potential Career Pathways based on Career Clusters.
 - b. School administration, counselors, school-based Personalized Learning Committee, and Central Office Instructional Staff will begin exploring alternative methods for identifying course proficiency.
2. August 2015
 - a. First draft of potential Career Pathways will be shared with Department Chairs for initial feedback, editing, and for sharing with faculty.
 - b. School administration, school-based Personalized Learning Committee, and Central Office Instructional Staff will begin recruiting local business and industry to provide meaningful job shadowing/apprenticeship opportunities for students.
3. September 2015 (School starts post-Labor Day)
 - a. Continue all activities from prior months
 - b. Department chairs will work with School administration, school-based Personalized Learning Committee, and Central Office Instructional Staff to create for each Career Pathway the graduation requirements, course offerings, and courses that potentially could be taken in alternative format.
 - c. A “J-term committee” will be created to begin planning for potential enrichment, remediation, and career-related offerings that could occur during the month of January.
 - d. The Personalized Learning Committee will visit Eminence High School in Eminence, KY and Danville High School in Danville, KY to learn from their efforts with Personalized Learning.
4. October 2015
 - a. Continue all activities from prior months
 - b. The Personalized Learning Committee will visit Fulton County, GA to learn from their efforts with Personalized Learning.
 - c. The Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Instruction and the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction will explore additional college partnerships.
 - d. A 2-hour early dismissal will be held on October 14 to provide teachers time to create lists of necessary additional courses to add to the various Career Pathways.
5. November 2015
 - a. Continue all activities from prior months
 - b. Consultant(s) from previous site visits will come to Salem High School to advise during the planning process.
 - c. School administration, counselors, school-based Personalized Learning Committee, and Central Office Instructional Staff along with teachers from various departments

- will begin planning for potential internships and industry partnerships based on Career Pathways.
- d. The Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Instruction will share the recommended additional courses with the faculty.
 - e. The recommended additional courses will be submitted to Central Office for Board Approval.
6. December 2015
 - a. Continue all activities from prior months
 - b. The School Board will approve additional/new courses for future years and/or to be approved by the state.
 - c. The J-term committee will present its initial plan to present to the entire faculty.
 - d. School administration, the school-based Personalized Learning Committee, and the Central Office Instructional Staff will share alternative methods for identifying course proficiency with the entire faculty.
 7. January 2016
 - a. Community focus groups will meet to discuss the new Career Pathways, course offerings, and the J-term concept/ideas.
 - b. A consultant from a previous site visit will visit to assist the Personalized Learning Committee plan.
 - c. Community feedback will be analyzed by School administration, the school-based Personalized Learning Committee, and the Central Office Instructional Staff.
 - d. The J-term planning committee will continue its work.
 - e. Teachers will begin curriculum development for any additional or new courses approved by the Board.
 - f. School administration, the school-based Personalized Learning Committee, and Central Office Instructional Staff will continue recruiting local business and industry to provide meaningful job shadowing/apprenticeship opportunities for students.
 8. February 2016
 - a. The J-term planning committee will continue its work.
 - b. Teachers will begin curriculum development for any additional or new courses approved by the Board.
 - c. School administration, the school-based Personalized Learning Committee, and Central Office Instructional Staff will continue recruiting local business and industry to provide meaningful job shadowing/apprenticeship opportunities for students.
 9. March 2016
 - a. The J-term planning committee will continue its work.
 - b. Teachers will begin curriculum development for any additional or new courses approved by the Board.
 - c. School administration, the school-based Personalized Learning Committee, and Central Office Instructional Staff will continue recruiting local business and industry to provide meaningful job shadowing/apprenticeship opportunities for students.

10. April 2016

- a. The J-term planning committee will continue its work.
- b. Teachers will begin curriculum development for any additional or new courses approved by the Board.
- c. School administration, the school-based Personalized Learning Committee, and Central Office Instructional Staff will continue recruiting local business and industry to provide meaningful job shadowing/apprenticeship opportunities for students.
- d. School administration, the school-based Personalized Learning Committee, and Central Office Instructional Staff will present the Division's plan to the Virginia Board of Education for approval.

B.7 Resources for Implementation

The current culture at Salem High School provides a fertile setting where innovative approaches to learning can be thoroughly investigated and implemented with fidelity.

The strength of a school starts with its community. The City of Salem and the Salem School Board's healthy and collaborative working relationship allows for efficiency and expediency when implementing programs and initiatives. The City's motto, "Children First," is a clear indication that it would provide the school system with the resources it needs to better meet the needs of the community's young people.

It is difficult for a school division to grow and progress if its leadership is not progressive. Rather than maintain the status quo, the Salem School Board exists to serve children by providing appropriate resources, hiring outstanding individuals, and casting a vision of continuous improvement. The Board enthusiastically supports the personalization of learning and has included goals, similar to those outlined in the High School Program Innovation Planning Grant Request for Proposals, in its Six-Year Plan.

In addition to a supportive and progressive School Board, Salem City Schools Superintendent, Dr. Alan Seibert, has proven himself to be an excellent liaison between the school system, the Virginia Department of Education, and best practices and research being implemented and investigated at a national and international level. His role as the president of VASS, his strong working relationship with our local General Assembly delegation, his history of leading innovation, and his 24 years of service to this division and community make him an ideal advocate for introducing the concepts and ideas in this grant proposal to the Division and the community. Furthermore, as investigated innovations evolve into implemented realities, his experience and connections at the state level will assist the Commonwealth in its goal of communicating best practices to others.

The structure of Salem City Schools is ideal for innovation and experimentation. While some might believe a small school system with fewer than 4,000 students is limited in its capabilities, the reality has been that Salem's size and structure has enabled it to efficiently make necessary changes to support students. In a small town like Salem, the high school becomes the center of community life. With few competing factors, all the resources of the community and the school

system can be focused on making sure that the students of Salem High School, both present and future, have everything they need for success.

The combination of a supportive community, a progressive school board, excellent leadership, and a small and efficient organizational structure has helped Salem play a leading role in creating and implementing innovative opportunities for students. For example, the Salem “Growth Project” became a model for other schools and divisions around the Commonwealth who were interested in measuring student growth and in exploring strategic compensation. As a result, Salem received the largest Strategic Compensation Grant in the Commonwealth. The fidelity with which the “Growth Project” was implemented is evidence of how Salem treats opportunities such as this.

This grant should be yet another opportunity for the resources of Salem to benefit the children of Salem and the Commonwealth.

B.8 Partnerships

The Salem City School Division has a history of developing partnerships that provide students with opportunities that might not otherwise exist in a small school division. One example is the partnership that exists between Salem High School and Virginia Western Community College. In addition to the largest dual enrollment population in the VWCC service area, Salem students benefit from the opportunity to attend a variety of programs at VWCC, such as engineering, mechatronics, and pre-health. More recently, the Division partnered with the Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce and Junior Achievement to launch a comprehensive Job Shadowing Program with the goal of creating opportunities for every student to experience a workplace-based experience while in high school.

Salem intends to leverage existing partnerships and create new partnerships with community agencies, businesses, industry, and postsecondary education, to investigate and implement innovations that create a personalized educational experience for all students with clear connections to postsecondary education, training, and careers.

Specifically, relationships with community agencies, businesses, and postsecondary education and training will be utilized to:

- create credit-bearing internships, job shadowing opportunities, and workplace learning environments for Salem High School students,
- guide in the creation of meaningful Career Pathways, including the specific identified pathways and the courses that students should experience as they explore those pathways,
- provide staffing for specialized classroom and/or work-related instructional opportunities for Salem High School students that cannot be provided due to current staffing limitations,
- assess the effectiveness of Salem High School’s efforts and provide ongoing feedback and guidance, and
- develop additional opportunities for Salem students to attain postsecondary credits while in high school.

Specific partnerships are detailed in the attached Innovation Partner Identification forms.

C. Budget Narrative

The Salem City School Division proposes the following budget expenditures to support its high school innovation planning efforts during the 2015-2016 school term. The Division is requesting \$20,000 in code 1000 (Personnel Services) to support additional pay for teachers and counselors for work performed outside of their contracted day. This work will include career pathway planning and development, curriculum planning and development, course development, and meetings with local business and postsecondary education and training providers. This budget category will also support hourly pay for teachers as they work to transition traditional courses to a digital format in order to facilitate the opportunity to offer more asynchronous learning opportunities to students.

The Division is requesting \$1,530 in code 2000 (Employee Benefits) to support charges required by the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) at a rate of .0765% of the \$20,000 proposed in code 1000.

The proposal outlines the need for \$20,000 in Code 3000 (Purchased Services) to support travel and consultation. The Division has allocated \$3,750 to support travel for a team of teachers, administrators and community stakeholders to visit Danville High School and Eminence High School in Kentucky to learn more about their use of flexible scheduling to create customized learning opportunities for students, as well as their use of Career Pathways to better connect learning to business and industry. The Division has also allocated \$3,750 for a visit to Fulton County Georgia to learn how Fulton students use Personalized Learning Roadmaps to create student-designed learning plans that fit their unique interests, aptitudes, and college/career goals. The number of participants and specific travel arrangements will ultimately determine the exact cost of these visits. School and Division staff development funds will be used to supplement the use of HSPI funds.

The additional \$12,500 allocated to code 3000 will support the Division's work with consultants who have significant experience developing and implementing the innovations outlined in the proposal. This estimate is based on a \$4,500 per diem rate quoted by Bea McGarvey and Chuck Schwann along with estimated expenses to support their travel. The Division also plans to consult with representatives from the school divisions listed above and will use school and division professional development funds to support any additional costs not provided by the grant.

The grant proposal includes a request for \$4,400 in code 4000 (Internal Services) to provide substitute teachers for up to 40 days at a rate of \$110/day. Sub days will be available for teachers who participate in grant related travel, planning meetings, consultation, job shadowing, and internships.

The remaining portion of the \$50,000 requested (\$4070) is allocated to code 6000 (Materials and Supplies) to support the purchase of additional copies of *Disrupting Class* by Clayton M. Christensen and *Inevitable: Mass Customized Learning in the Age of Empowerment* by Charles

Schwahn and Beatrice McGarvey for staff, parents, students, and community stakeholders. Funding will also be available to support the development, printing, and distribution of brochures, registration materials, and general information and resources for parents, students, and community stakeholders.

While the Salem City School's grant proposal does not specify in-kind support, it is clear that division and school-level administrative staff and community stakeholders will allocate significant time and effort to the research and development of the innovations outlined in section B4 of the grant proposal. It is also clear from previous expenditures for research, travel, and professional development that the Division is committed to providing the human and capital resources necessary to support innovations that create a customized learning experience for students with connections to college and career preparation.

D. Evaluation Plan

The Salem City School Division has an established structure of committees and communication tools that will be utilized to ensure that each phase of the High School Program Innovation Grant is communicated well and that the ideas of various stakeholders are considered throughout the planning process.

Committee meetings will be organized by agenda, and feedback regarding the effectiveness of meetings will be collected from stakeholders. The planning team will use the proposal goals, objectives and timeline to clearly identify committee outcomes and deadlines. Overall effectiveness will be measured against the goals and objectives outlined in the proposal and stakeholder feedback collected and compared to baseline data collected in May 2015.

The innovations outlined in this proposal will be adjusted as division representatives learn more about the development and successful implementation of similar innovations throughout the planning process. Business and industry representatives will play a significant role in identifying the knowledge and skills associated with each Career Pathway, and will work closely with teachers and postsecondary education and training providers to develop the coursework and workplace experienced necessary to ensure that every student graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in the 21st Century Global Economy.

Ultimately, representatives from business, industry, and postsecondary education will approve the Career Pathways, the associated coursework, and workplace-based training opportunities. Students and parents will provide feedback throughout the process related to the successful implementation of various program innovations and how the program impacts their ability to access postsecondary education, training, and careers. In addition, the division will track performance indicators outlined on the Salem City Schools Quality Profile to monitor the impact of program innovations.