

Charlottesville City Schools/University of Virginia Lab School

October 2023 School Board Update

Planning Grant Progress

- In July we launched the Computer Science (CS) Pathway as part of the Starr Hill Pathways summer program from the UVA Equity Center. The CS pathway provided over 20 middle and high school students the opportunity to explore CS concepts through hands-on activities and to use their newfound knowledge and skills to solve a real-world problem through the design thinking process. In addition, we provided opportunities for students to explore CS-related career pathways with guest speakers and field trips to WillowTree and C4K.
- In July we also launched the Curriculum Design Accelerator experience for both current and pre-service teachers. Five UVA School of Education and Human Development (SEHD) teacher candidates and two Buford science teachers joined students in the CS Pathway to see and engage with examples of project-based learning (PBL) that integrated computer science concepts, engage student interest, and connect with community partners. In the afternoons, professional learning opportunities offered more insight into PBL and participants made plans for integrating computationally-rich activities in student-driven learning experiences for the 2023-2024 school year.
- Currently, two science teacher candidates from UVA SEHD are doing their internships with the physical science teachers at Buford. We are also working with science teachers to support them in the development and implementation of two PBL activities in their classrooms as well as obtaining materials for hands-on investigations.
- Working together with the Equity Center, we are investigating efforts to provide Buford students with ongoing community mentoring throughout the 2023-2024 school year and provide teachers with additional professional learning opportunities around computationally-rich and community-based projects.
- In collaboration with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Virginia we are planning a *Charlottesville Random Hacks of Kindness, Jr.* event where youth learn new technology creation skills and collaborate to solve real-world problems. The event will be hosted at the new Albemarle Boys and Girls Clubs Campus for 7th- 9th grade students from Starr Hill Pathways, C4K and Boys and Girls Club during the January 26th Teacher workday.
- We have continued our bi-weekly meetings among partners and have met with our grant contacts with the Virginia Department of Education to ensure compliance with planning grant procedures.

Charlottesville Middle School Innovation Hub

- In collaboration with our partners during the planning grant work and in conjunction with the transition to Charlottesville Middle School, we have conceptualized the formal lab school effort to be the *Charlottesville Middle School Innovation Hub* starting in the 2024-2025 school year. The focus of the Innovation Hub is to improve student outcomes using PBL combined with community-based partnerships to provide the catalyst to engage all students in personally meaningful and interdisciplinary learning experiences. The Innovation Hub will be founded on three guiding principles to improve student outcomes: 1) developing a community of practice around education that incorporates interdisciplinary, project-based, computing-rich learning experiences; 2) engaging students by incorporating their voices and choices throughout the learning process; and 3) making meaningful community connections to engage students, teachers, and parents in real-world problem solving, mentorship, and career explorations.
- The Innovation Hub will be a space where all Charlottesville Middle School students have dedicated, scheduled time during their classes to learn new skills and collaborate to solve real-world community-based problems through interdisciplinary and capstone projects. We envision for the 2024-2025 school year that all students will experience the Innovation Hub approximately once a week as part of their science classes.
- The Innovation Hub Lab Manager will facilitate this learning by working with the Science Learning Coordinator and science teachers at Charlottesville Middle School and the lab school governing board. The Lab Manager will also coordinate mentors from UVA and community organizations, as well as educational research about innovative teaching and learning.
- Future SEHD teacher candidates will be placed at the Innovation Hub as part of their clinical experiences.
- We are currently looking for parent and student involvement in the planning process.
- We will submit a full lab school application for the Charlottesville Middle School Innovation Hub at the end of October to the Virginia Department of Education.

We are happy to answer questions. Please reach out to Kim Wilkens, ksw8y@virginia.edu or Jennie Chiu, jlchiu@virginia.edu.