INNOVATION ZONE/FLEXIBILITY APPLICATION

BALDWIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

Date Received: March 19, 2014

Synopsis: To establish the Digital Renaissance Virtual School as a permanent, full-time stand-alone high school (Grades 9-12) that will continue to provide motivated, independent learners the opportunity to earn their Alabama High School Diploma through flexible, personalized learning experiences available online – anytime, anywhere.

Statute Affected: Alabama Administrative Code, 290-3-1, page 3-1-7 (12/31/13)(2) Length of School Day and School Term: 2. The length of the school day shall be at least six (6) hours of actual teaching exclusive of lunch and recess.

Status: Approved by the Alabama State Board of Education on May 14, 2014.
Alabama State Department of Education
Innovation Zone Application

Please fill out all appropriate boxes and respond to all questions.
The application/plan must be in 12 pt. font and is limited to 20 pages.

Section 1 - Applicant Information

School System: Baldwin County Public Schools
Contact Name & Title: Dr. Stephanie Harrison, Secondary Coordinator, Instructional Support
Telephone Number: 251-972-8525
E-Mail Address: sharrison@bcbx.org

Number of Schools Involved: 1
Number of Students Served/Affected by Plan: First Year Target Enrollment 200
Number of Teachers Involved/Affected by Plan: Undetermined/ Instruction provided by Baldwin County teachers and ACCESS teachers, supported by principal and counselor
Number of Service Personnel Involved/Affected by Plan: Undetermined

Please place a check beside the appropriate entity(ies) applying for Innovation Zone designation:

School
Department or Subdivision of School
Coalition of Schools (fill out multiple listings below)
Feeder System of Schools
☑ District

Please complete the chart below for the District’s leadership team that will support plan (add rows as needed):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM</th>
<th>Name of Team Member</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Alan Lee</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Alan T. Lee</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Pamela Henson</td>
<td>Director, Instructional Support</td>
<td>Pamela Henson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Stephanie Harrison</td>
<td>Secondary Coordinator</td>
<td>Stephanie Harrison</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Don Blanchard</td>
<td>High School Executive Principal</td>
<td>Don Blanchard</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Dana Einfeld</td>
<td>Instructional Transformation Specialist</td>
<td>Dona Einfeld</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Homer Coffman</td>
<td>Chief Technology Officer</td>
<td>Homer Coffman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. John Wilson</td>
<td>Chief Financial Officer</td>
<td>John Wilson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please complete the chart below for each school that will be involved/affected by the plan (insert additional rows as needed):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Name of Team Member</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
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Section 2- Abstract and Waiver Requests

Provide a project summary that briefly describes the project’s vision, goals, activities, and key features for student success that will be addressed. Please include how the proposal reflects Alabama’s PLAN 2020. Please limit the length of the abstract to the text box found on this page only.

Vision: To establish the Digital Renaissance Virtual School as a permanent, full-time, stand alone high school (grades 9-12) that will continue to provide motivated, independent learners the opportunity to earn their Alabama High School Diploma through flexible, personalized learning experiences available online - anytime, anywhere.

Goal(s):
1. Provide an additional pathway for students to attain an Alabama High School Diploma.
2. Ensure high school graduates are prepared for college and career success.

Activities:
1. Required credits and most electives are provided by ACCESS, Compass, Edgenuity, and Baldwin County School District developed and/or purchased and approved online courses.
2. Online teachers are provided and trained by the Baldwin County Public School System and/or the Troy University ACCESS Support System.
3. Baldwin County Public Schools provides opportunities for Digital Renaissance Virtual School students to earn college credit through dual enrollment and early release programs in partnership with Faulkner State Community College, University of South Alabama, the University of Alabama, and other approved institutions.
4. Baldwin County Public Schools provides hands-on vocational opportunities for students through Co-Op and Community Workforce Development.
5. Baldwin County Public Schools provides support services to all Digital Renaissance Virtual School students that include but are not limited to proctoring of scheduled course exams, administration of all assessments mandated by the Alabama State Department of Education, orientation to online learning, academic guidance and counseling, activity and progress monitoring, tutoring, and access to technology and additional digital resources through the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance.
6. Students will have an opportunity to continue their formal education year-round by offering online classes during the summer.
7. Accountability data is reported in accordance with Alabama State Department of Education guidelines.

Key Features:
1. Stand-alone, full-time online public high school.
2. Flexible and personalized learning experiences.
3. Anytime, anywhere learning.
4. High school plans customized to individual students.
5. College credit opportunities through dual enrollment.
6. Workplace experience opportunities through Co-Op and Community Workforce Development.
7. Support services for all enrolled students.
8. Early graduation option.
9. Students will be permitted to take courses year round (including the summer months).
10. Credit advancement available (Plan approved by ALSDE in March 2014.)

Alabama’s PLAN 2020

As of 2012, thirty-one states and Washington, D.C. have full-time online schools with an approximate student population of 275,000 (International Association for K-12 Learning, 2012). Upon receiving Alabama State Department of Education approval of the online high school pilot on Friday, August 16th,
2013, twelve students began classes in the Digital Renaissance Virtual School the following Monday. At this time, the Digital Renaissance Virtual School pilot program has twenty students, and we are still receiving applications for enrollment. We expect to complete the school year with a total enrollment that is close to our pilot cap of 30 students. A primary goal of the pilot of the Digital Renaissance Virtual School is to provide students with an additional graduation pathway that specifically addresses three areas of Alabama's Plan 2020: 1.) Every child a graduate, 2.) Every graduate prepared for college, career, and adulthood 3.) Differentiation of the typical instruction and learning model to meet the individual needs of students.

Our experience with the pilot of the Digital Renaissance Virtual School has confirmed our belief that a flexible, online school is a necessary option for some high school students. In our virtual school, we have identified students who fulfill the profiles of potential virtual learners - students for whom traditional, brick and mortar education could be a challenge or limitation. We currently have students with prohibitive medical issues or family hardships that prevent them from fully participating in traditional education and other students for whom traditional education can be perceived as a limitation of their learning or professional potential. Under the traditional school model, frequent medical appointments and prolonged absences cause some students with medical issues extreme difficulty in keeping standard course pace; other students fall behind in coursework because they are compelled to work long hours to help support their households. For our virtual students, the convenience of anytime, anywhere learning and the flexibility of self-pacing has proven beneficial in allowing students to maintain high levels of learning while mitigating life’s challenges. In other instances, some students find face-to-face attendance difficult to manage because they are pursuing excellence in personal talents, which may define their futures. As an example, one Digital Renaissance Virtual School student is a world champion indoor surfer and travels nationally throughout the year for competitions. In such a pursuit requiring extended time away from home, some students find it difficult to realize their maximum learning potential in the structure of a traditional school. Further, there are many capable, driven students who want to complete high school in less than four years but who are constrained by the traditional school schedule. Currently, the Digital Renaissance Virtual School serves at least three students who are aiming for early high school graduation by attempting to earn additional credits this year. For all the aforementioned, the Digital Renaissance Virtual School has proven to be a viable force in providing an opportunity for an individualized education that meets the needs of our diverse population of students so that they can graduate on time or even earlier than expected.

To ensure that all of our students graduate prepared for college, work, and adulthood in the 21st Century, the Digital Renaissance Virtual School provides online curriculum aligned with the College and Career Ready standards as described in Alabama’s Plan 2020. Currently, students in the Digital Renaissance Virtual School take all of their classes online using the Alabama State Department of Education’s ACCESS program. All required courses, except L.I.F.E. Physical Education and Career Preparedness are available through ACCESS. Courses required for graduation but not provided by ACCESS will be developed and staffed by Baldwin County teachers. These courses will be delivered using an approved learning management system. We also plan to expand our online course offerings by allowing our students to take approved core and elective classes through Compass, Edgenuity, and other approved computer-based learning programs. These courses will be facilitated by Baldwin County teachers who have been trained in online learning strategies. Additionally, students are permitted to take courses through several community colleges and universities with whom we have dual enrollment agreements. Students are also encouraged to participate in Baldwin County workforce development programs, co-op, internships, community service projects, and clubs sponsored by the Digital Renaissance Virtual School.

Students have daily access to a multifaceted support system provided by the Digital Renaissance Virtual School staff. Support services include but are not limited to college and career counseling, tutoring, technology training, exam proctoring, and orientation. The staff of the Digital Renaissance Virtual School
is committed to ensuring that students develop self-regulatory skills and habits of life-long learning. Students who only meet with their teachers virtually are required to monitor their own understanding of the content, to discern when to contact the virtual school staff or ACCESS teachers for additional assistance, to know how to advocate for themselves, to determine the amount of time needed to complete daily assignments, to schedule exams with ACCESS teachers and Baldwin County proctors, and to maintain self-motivation to stay on track with their coursework. We are confident that this immersion into digital learning within a nurturing sphere of minimum risk and maximum support is preparing our students for success in college and the workplace. Regarding online experiences for high school students, Kathleen Airhart, Director of Tennessee’s Putman County Schools, said, “The reality is, when a student leaves us, whether they’re going to a four-year college, a technical college, or going into the world of work, they’re going to have to do an online course.” (Education Week, 2011).

Virtual schools represent a viable venue for school reform models recommended by the U.S. Department of Education, The National Governor’s Association, The National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National High School Alliance (Cavanaugh, Gillian, Kromrey, Hess, & Blomeyer, 2004). The U.S. Department of Education identified small school size, scheduling choice, career academies, early college initiatives, and student engagement as the research-based frameworks that facilitate improved student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Cavanaugh et al. (2004) remarked on the potential of virtual schools to advance reform, “By offering scheduling flexibility, personalization, freedom from a large physical school, engaging tools of distance learning, opportunities to accelerate learning, and access to rigorous academic programs, virtual schools are not just important examples of school reform models, but virtual schools may represent the best hope for bringing high school reform quickly to large numbers of students” (Cavanaugh et al., 2004, p. 22).

For your reference, the proposal to pilot the Digital Renaissance Virtual School that was submitted to the Alabama State Department of Education on July 15, 2013 is attached.
### Waiver Requests

Indicate the specific type(s) of policy or code that prohibit or constrain the project that you wish to request a waiver from:

___ Specific waiver requested of ALSDE policy
___X___ Specific waiver requested of *Alabama Administrative Code (AAC)* statute

| ALSDE Policy Waiver Request  | Alabama Administrative Code (AAC) Statute Waiver Request | Impact of the Waiver 
( Specify memo, etc., outlining policy ) | ( Specify AAC Rule No., etc. ) |
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A waiver from the aforementioned code will allow students to participate in a rigorous, relevant instructional environment that is built upon evidence of student learning outcomes as opposed to the daily number of hours of "actual teaching." Daily instruction will be measured by successful completion of learning activities, mastery of content, and credits earned. In a virtual school environment, it is difficult to accurately measure the specific number of hours of "actual teaching" that occurs each school day. However, we can measure learning by successful completion of activities and examinations required to earn course credits. Students enrolled in the Digital Renaissance Virtual School are required to attempt at least the same number of credits per year as students enrolled in Baldwin County brick and mortar schools, to maintain adequate course pace, and to stay on track for graduation. They will attend school the same number of days during the academic year as students in our traditional schools, following the Baldwin County Public Schools' calendar.
**Requirements That Cannot Be Waived**

- Those imposed by federal law
- Those related to the health and safety of students or employees
- Those imposed by ethics laws
- Those imposed by the *Alabama Child Protection Act of 1999, Title 16, Chapter 22A, Code of Alabama 1975*
- Those imposed by open records or open meetings laws
- Those related to financial or academic reporting or transparency
- Those designed to protect the civil rights of students or employees
- Those related to the state retirement system or state health insurance plan

**Not Allowable for Waiver**

- May not compensate an employee at an annual amount that is less than the amount the employee would otherwise be afforded through the State Minimum Salary Schedule
- May not involuntarily remove any rights or privileges acquired by any employee under the *Students First Act of 2011, Title 16, Chapter 24C, Code of Alabama 1975*
- May not deny any right or privilege granted to a new employee pursuant to the *Students First Act of 2011*
- May not authorize the formation of a charter school

**Section 3- Vision and Needs Assessment**

**Creative Vision for the Project**

1. What is the purpose and expected outcome of this project (include expected outcomes for students)?

   The purpose of the Digital Renaissance Virtual School is to provide students an alternate pathway toward attaining a high school diploma through flexible, personalized learning experiences available online - anytime, anywhere. Students will have an opportunity for accelerated course progression, early college credit, credit advancement, and authentic workforce experiences outside the traditional classroom structure. Enhanced and sustained student engagement will culminate in increased graduation rates and student achievement.

2. Explain how the school’s or school district’s current data influenced the need for the project described in Question 1 above?

   Baldwin County Public School System consistently receives parent requests for flexible, but reasonable, modifications to the traditional high school structure for the purposes of better meeting students’ individual learning needs and providing more opportunities for students to intensively pursue social, cultural, vocational, and religious interests. Based on stakeholder interest and Baldwin County students’ convenient access to reliable technology and digital resources through the Digital Renaissance, a virtual educational experience is a logical progression for the Baldwin County Public School System. With a current graduation rate of 80%, an alternate pathway toward graduation is needed.

3. How is this project linked to Alabama’s PLAN 2020? How is this project linked to the school’s or district’s strategic plan?

   The Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School is aligned to Alabama’s PLAN 2020 in its intent and potential to offer students an additional graduation pathway that rewards achievement and affords rigorous, relevant, and flexible college and career preparation customized to the interests of the individual student. Preparing every student to be college and workforce ready is one of the five target
areas of Baldwin County Public School’s strategic plan. By providing students the resources, environment, and support to develop skills of self-regulation, self-advocacy, and self-motivation, Baldwin County Public School System empowers students, including those facing hardship, pursuing interests intensively, or simply not thriving in traditional classroom instruction, to continually grow academically, vocationally, and personally in their progression toward earning an Alabama High School Diploma. Imbued with habits of lifelong learning, Baldwin County’s Digital Renaissance Virtual School students will be prepared for success in college and the workplace.

4. How is the school’s or district’s project connected to best practice and current research in reference to raising student achievement and preparing students to be college- and career-ready?

“Differentiating instruction for all learners” is a core theme of Alabama PLAN 2020 (2013, p. 27). The proposed Digital Renaissance Virtual School accordingly exemplifies a multidimensional framework of differentiation. Students interact with content aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards, Alabama-certified and highly qualified teachers, and other distance learners dispersed throughout the state via asynchronous and synchronous online course activity. Asynchronously, Baldwin County and ACCESS teachers provide pacing guidance, introductory instruction, assignment feedback, and individualized instruction through the dropbox, quizzes, discussion, and email tools of the course management system. Synchronously, Baldwin County and ACCESS teachers periodically meet with students face-to-face and online using internet videoconferencing software, which virtually simulates face-to-face interaction. An additional tier of student support that includes proctoring, tutoring, mentoring, and counseling is provided by Digital Renaissance Virtual School professional staff, who frequently interact with students through both face-to-face and internet videoconferencing meetings. In their online coursework, Digital Renaissance Virtual School students interact with other distance learners through structured discussion activities, which often require students to research content related topics, propose solutions to problems, write position statements, and support assertions with evidence. Digital Renaissance Virtual School students also interact with one another in small group study for specific courses and organized school activities including field trips, service activities, and organizations that appeal to the development of civic responsibility, character, and individual talent(s). The infancy of the Digital Renaissance Virtual School presents rich opportunity to involve students in the creation, planning, and implementation of the activities that will define the school as it continues to grow. Through required activity in online classes and enriching educational experiences at the school level, Digital Renaissance Virtual School students’ interaction with other learners in both face-to-face and virtual learning environments will develop skills of research, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving, thereby preparing students for continually evolving colleges and workplaces of the 21st Century. In the Digital Renaissance Virtual School model, differentiated instruction is achieved through meaningful student interaction with content, instructors, and other learners in the course. According to the “Equivalency Theorem” for developing “sufficient levels of deep and meaningful learning,” maintaining one of the three forms of interaction (learner-content, learner-instructor, learner-learner) at amplified levels ensures that deep and meaningful learning is possible (Anderson, 2002, p. 4).

In this virtual environment, students are licensed to exercise control over their learning with options to: 1) Accelerate in subjects and/or concepts for which the individual’s existing proficiency is high; 2) allocate additional time and enterprise to achieve proficiency in other subjects and/or concepts which pose more challenge to the individual; and 3) commit time and application to electives, credit-bearing college courses, and workforce development experiences which appeal to individual interests, talents, and postsecondary plans. Students’ clearance to accelerate through courses and participate in early college credit and workforce experiences adds a layer of customization that optimizes conditions for
authentic student engagement. The school reform vision described by Cavanaugh, Gillian, Kromrey, Hess, and Blomeyer (2004) and referenced previously is encapsulated in the proposed Digital Renaissance Virtual School.

5. How will this project be supported and monitored for implementation by the district?
Digital Renaissance Virtual School staff to include a principal, counselor, and teacher(s) (if supported by the Alabama State Department of Education Foundation Program) will be assigned to support student learning and monitor student progress. The staff will be located at the Digital Renaissance Learning Center, where student orientation, counseling and guidance, tutoring, proctored examinations, virtual instruction, and state assessments will typically take place. Attendance will be monitored daily, and students' course progress will be monitored weekly. Students' attendance, course grades and state-mandated assessment scores will be recorded and reported in accordance with all district, state, and federal policies.
**Section 4- Goals, Objectives, Evaluation, Timeline**

**GOALS:**

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<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Budget</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Identify the measurable objectives that will be used to determine success in achieving these goals** (Must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely goals (SMART)) | **Develop activities for each objective that are:** creative and innovative; impact student success; allow for greater flexibility; change the way the school(s)/school system currently operates | **Principal**
**Counselor**
**Teacher** | **Identify the timeline for the activities (include month/year)** | **Indicate budget requirements and funding source (include formulas used to derive totals in budget sections, e.g., 3 subs @$143/day=total)** |
| Students will maintain a 95% attendance rate. | Attendance is registered when the student logs in to the learning management system. Students who are “absent” will be contacted by the Digital Renaissance Virtual School staff. Students who are not meeting the attendance goal will work with school staff to develop an attendance intervention plan. Students who continue to maintain excessive absences will be required to resume full time face-to-face attendance at the brick and mortar school for which they are zoned. | Principal
Counselor | Daily monitoring beginning August 2014. | None presently |
| Students will maintain a 2.0 GPA. | Digital Renaissance Virtual School staff will collaborate with each student to develop an individualized academic plan that includes learning strategies and a structure for successful completion of their courses. Students will access digital content (provided through the Digital Renaissance) for the purposes of remediation and enrichment. | Principal
Counselor
Teacher | Weekly monitoring, beginning August 2014. | None presently |
As needed, students will use Adobe Connect, Skype, or other Internet videoconferencing tools to participate in tutoring sessions with Digital Renaissance Virtual School staff. Face-to-face tutoring and counseling will also be available.

| Students will progress through courses at the standard rate dictated by the teacher or at an accelerated rate. | Students may progress through any online course ahead of the standard schedule and are encouraged to complete courses early. When students complete courses before the term ends, they may immediately progress to the next sequenced course or begin an elective course. Digital Renaissance Virtual School staff will collaborate with each student to develop an individualized academic plan that includes learning strategies and a structure for successful completion of their courses. Recognizing that some students have the desire to graduate early, the Digital Renaissance Virtual School will offer classes year round so that students can continue their formal education throughout the summer. | Principal Counselor Teacher | Weekly monitoring, beginning August 2014. | None presently |

### Section 5- Project Evaluation and Sustainability

1. **How will you evaluate and report the impact this innovation project has on increasing student success and/or other stated goals and objectives?**

   The Digital Renaissance Virtual School will be responsible for all school accountability measures mandated by local, state, and federal authorities. Accountability data indicating student attendance and achievement as measured by Quality Core, Plan, ACT, WorkKeys, and Advanced Placement will be reported to the Alabama State Department of Education and/or our local school board. Additionally, reports indicating progress toward meeting objectives (attendance, grade point average, and course progress) stated in this application will be submitted quarterly to the Baldwin County high school leadership team.
2. How will this innovation project be sustained?

As we reach the conclusion of the virtual school pilot period, Baldwin County Public Schools is seeking Alabama State Department of Education approval to establish the Digital Renaissance Virtual School as a stand-alone high school (grades 9-12) with its own cost center. If approval is granted, Baldwin County Public Schools will advertise and select personnel (funded by the Foundation Program) to provide essential support for virtual school students throughout the traditional school year and the summer. We will immediately begin recruiting students for the opening of the 2014-2015 school year with a goal of enrolling at least 200 students. Baldwin County will provide locally funded programs and resources such as the Digital Renaissance to all virtual school students. Central office staff including but not limited to the secondary coordinator and high school executive principal will work closely with the Digital Renaissance Virtual School principal to increase enrollment and ensure student success in this unique Baldwin County high school.
Appendix

Record of Commitment

Use this form to report staff, parent, and public commitment regarding the innovation application and plan. Use a separate form for each school.

School: N/A

School District: Baldwin County Public Schools

Notice of Meeting(s) (Date provided to faculty, department, parents, community, etc.): August 1, 2013

*Meeting Date(s): August 6, 2013 (two meetings) and August 7, 2013 (one meeting). Online survey open August 1, 2013-August 12, 2013

Parent Representatives:

Name: N/A ____________________________ Signature: ____________________________

Name: ____________________________ Signature: ____________________________

Name: ____________________________ Signature: ____________________________

We certify that this application/plan is supported by the school’s PTA/PTO.

Continuous Improvement Leadership Team Representatives:

Name: N/A ____________________________ Signature: ____________________________

Name: ____________________________ Signature: ____________________________

Name: ____________________________ Signature: ____________________________

We certify that 80 percent of the faculty affected by the application/plan has voted to support the application/plan.

Record of Public Discussion and Input

District and School Representatives:

Name: Dr. Stephanie Harrison, Secondary Coordinator ____________________________ Signature: Stephanie Harrison

Name: Mr. Homer Coffman, Chief Technology Officer ____________________________ Signature: Homer Coffman

Name: Mr. Don Blanchard, Executive Principal ____________________________ Signature: Don Blanchard

Name: Dr. Dana Einfeld, Instructional Transformation Specialist ____________________________ Signature: Dana Einfeld

We certify that multiple opportunities were provided for public discussion and input of this plan.

*Record of sign-in sheets and input from various groups and meetings should be kept at the district level. Sign-in Sheets and Online Response Survey data are on record with Baldwin County Public School System.
Local Education Agency Report of Support or Concerns

Use this form to report the school or district and superintendent support or concerns, or both, about the innovation to the principal and faculty. Use a separate form for each school.

School: Digital Renaissance Virtual School

School District: Baldwin County Public Schools

Date of School/Department/Subdivision Receipt of Application: July 2013 (original application approved by Dr. Bice as a pilot program)

Date of Regularly Scheduled Board of Education Meeting: July 18, 2013 (Board Work Session) and July 30, 2013 (Board Meeting)

Local School Board of Education Members:

Name of President: Mr. Norman Moore

Name Vice President: Mr. Robert Callahan, Jr.

Name of Member: Mr. David Cox

Name of Member: Mr. David Tarwater

Name of Member: Mr. Elmer McDaniel

Name of Member: Mrs. Angie Swiger

Name of Member: Mrs. Shannon Cauley

Support:

On July 30, 2013, Baldwin County Public School System Board Members unanimously demonstrated their support for the formation of the Digital Renaissance Virtual School pending approval by the Alabama State Department of Education.

Concerns:

None

(Report of the Local Education Agency must be forwarded to school/school district for submission to Alabama State Board of Education with the application/plan).
Community Partner Support

Use this form to document community organization/agency support and partnership for the innovation plan/project. Use a separate form for each community partner.

School/Schools: Digital Renaissance Virtual School

School District: Baldwin County Public Schools

Date(s) of School/School District/Community Partner Dialogues: Multiple meetings in June, July, and August 2013

Name of Community Organization/Agency: Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, and Students Statewide (ACCESS)

Contact Person: Reba Davis, Director, Troy University Support Center

Contact Person E-mail Address: rrdavis@troy.edu

Contact Person Telephone Number: 866-399-7512

Contact Person Address: 1101 S. Brundidge Street, Troy, Alabama, 36082

Explain the community organization’s/agency’s commitment to the Plan/Project:

The Troy ACCESS Support Center plans to support the Digital Renaissance Virtual School by providing the online teachers for the courses provided by the ALSDE through ACCESS. The Troy Support Center will train teachers and keep them updated with online pedagogy and technology updates.

List the resources and contributions (not monetary) that the organization/agency is making to this Plan/Project:

The Troy ACCESS Support Center plans to support the Digital Renaissance Virtual School by making staff available by phone, visits, and training. Troy ACCESS will host faculty meetings. The Troy Support Center will train the teachers and keep them updated with online pedagogy and technology updates. The Troy Support Center will evaluate the teachers and assign mentors to new teachers as needed.

Agency Representative (Name) Reba Davis

Title: Director, Troy University Support Center

Signature: ___________________________
Community Partner Support

Use this form to document community organization/agency support and partnership for the innovation plan/project. Use a separate form for each community partner.

School/Schools: Digital Renaissance Virtual School

School District: Baldwin County Public Schools

Date(s) of School/School District/Community Partner Dialogues: August 7, 2013

Name of Community Organization/Agency: Baldwin County Education Coalition

Contact Person: Terry Burkle, Executive Director

Contact Person E-mail Address: tburkle@betterbaldwin.com

Contact Person Telephone Number: 251-942-6695

Contact Person Address: P.O. Box 1117, Foley, AL 36536

Explain the community organization's/agency's commitment to the Plan/Project:
The mission of the Baldwin County Education Coalition is to engage community stakeholders in public education and to advocate with one voice for the success of every child in Baldwin County. The Coalition, comprised of seven educational enrichment foundations, is committed to provide support and resources to ensure every child has access to the same opportunities, whether in the high school environment or virtual school.

List the resources and contributions (not monetary) that the organization/agency is making to this Plan/Project:
The Coalition has partnered with the Board of Education to implement a county-wide Partners in Education program to engage citizens, create awareness, and secure resources (volunteer & financial) for every school in Baldwin County. Programs and services currently provided will also be extended to students participating in the virtual school.

Agency Representative (Name): Terry Burkle

Title: Executive Director, Baldwin County Education Coalition

Signature: ________________________________
Innovation Zone Requirements

1. Completed applications for Innovation Zone designation must be typed in 12-point font and received by December 31, 2013.
2. Eighty (80) percent of faculty (those affected by Innovation Proposal) must approve the application.
3. Please ensure that the following information included in this application are completed:
   • Record of Commitment
   • Record of Public Discussion and Input
   • Local Education Agency Report of Support or Concerns
   • Community Partner Support
4. Your application/plan should be submitted in a PDF document via e-mail to bevndavis@alsde.edu by 4 p.m. on December 31, 2013.
5. A semiannual progress report should be submitted to the Alabama State Department of Education.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

To determine staff support, the Innovation Zone application/plan must be submitted to all employees affected by the design of the plan for a secret ballot vote at special meetings called to determine the level of commitment.

• The meeting is to be called with two weeks’ prior notice, and the vote is to be conducted and certified to the principal, superintendent, and school board president by the Continuous Improvement Leadership Team.
• An absentee ballot must be given to each employee eligible to vote who cannot attend the meeting.
• At least 80 percent of the employees who are eligible to vote must approve the school’s Innovation Zone plan.
• Any regular employee at a school applying for or designated as an Innovation Zone whose job duties may be affected by implementation of the Innovation Zone plan or proposed plan may request a transfer to another school in the school system. The school system shall make every reasonable effort to accommodate the transfer.
• Please make sure your application is submitted to your local board in time to receive signatures and listing of supports/concerns of Board Members before the application due date (December 31, 2013).

For an August 2014 start date, completed grant application must be RECEIVED via e-mail to bevndavis@alsde.edu by 4 p.m. on December 31, 2013.
July 15, 2013

Dr. Thomas R. Bice
State Superintendent of Education
Alabama Department of Education
5114 Gordon Persons Building
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36130-2101

Dear Dr. Bice:

Attached is a proposal to create Alabama’s first public virtual high school - the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School. It is our vision that this high school, in partnership with the Troy ACCESS Support Center, will provide motivated, independent learners with an opportunity to earn their Alabama High School Diploma through flexible, personalized learning opportunities that are available online - anywhere, anytime.

According to the International Association for K-12 Online Learning, 31 states and Washington D.C. have full-time online schools. In 2011-2012, approximately 275,000 students were enrolled in full-time online schools. As one of the largest and fastest growing counties in the state, we are equipped to create a model virtual high school that will meet the diverse needs of our students and prepare them for any post-secondary path they might choose.

We plan to open enrollment to students who currently attend one of our brick and mortar high schools but who might be better served in a more flexible, personalized learning environment. We anticipate that by providing our students with this additional approach to earning a high school diploma, our graduation rate will increase. Also, we estimate that approximately 200 Baldwin County high school students participate in homeschool programs, and we plan to market the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School to these students as an option for them to participate in an accredited, public school.

We appreciate your consideration of our proposal to create the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School. If approved, we are prepared to begin enrolling students for the 2013-2014 academic year. Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you might have. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Alan T. Lee, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Attachment
Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School
2013-2014

Vision

Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School provides motivated, independent learners with an opportunity to earn their Alabama High School Diploma through flexible, personalized learning opportunities that are available online - anywhere, anytime.

Enrollment

Students enrolled in the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School should be highly motivated, independent learners.

Students enrolling in the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School must meet the following requirements.

- Reside in Baldwin County, Alabama
- Be a rising 9th, 10th, or 11th grader (Rising seniors will be permitted to enroll in 2014-2015.)
- Be on track for graduation
- Participate in the Digital Renaissance, which provides students with 24 hour personal access to a school system owned MacBook Air and other digital resources
- Have consistent, daily access to the Internet (minimum 1.5 Mbps)
- Have a minimum overall GPA of 2.0 in courses taken during the previous academic year
- Have no more than 5 unexcused, full-day absences during the previous academic year
- Meet all other requirements for enrollment in Baldwin County Public Schools

Student Expectations

- Technology
  Consistent, daily access to a computer and the internet are critical resources for successful online learning. Participation in the Digital Renaissance provides students with 24-hour personal access to a school system owned MacBook Air and other digital resources needed for online learning. Students are responsible for acquiring and maintaining consistent, daily access to the internet. Students are expected to adhere to the Baldwin County Acceptable Use Policy.

- Attendance
  Students are expected to adhere to the Baldwin County Board of Education’s attendance policy. Students are expected to “attend” each class, each school day in accordance with the Baldwin County school calendar. Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School staff will monitor and record student attendance daily. When a student logs in to a class, he or she is considered present for that day.

- Course Progression
  Students are permitted to work ahead of the standard course progression to finish their courses early. Students who complete their courses early will be enrolled in additional courses needed for graduation.

While students are encouraged to work through their courses at their own pace and daily schedule, they are expected to progress through their online courses at a rate that is at least comparable to the progression of a traditional class. For example, if the student has been taking the online course for eight weeks, then he or she should be participating in learning activities assigned during the eighth week of the online course.
• **Proctored Examinations**
  Students will take all examinations at the Digital Renaissance Learning Center or at their base high school. A member of the school faculty will proctor all exams, and documentation indicating the date each exam was taken and the name of the proctor will be maintained. Scores earned on exams that are not taken at an approved testing site with a proctor are subject to invalidation and review by the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School Academic Dishonesty Committee. Students are required to provide their own transportation to the testing site.

**Minimum Requirements to Remain in Program**

All Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School students must adhere to the following requirements, or they will be withdrawn and enrolled in their traditional base school to complete their courses.

• Participate in the Digital Renaissance and maintain consistent, daily access to the MacBook Air provided by the Baldwin County Public School System
• Maintain consistent, daily access to the internet (minimum 1.5 Mbs)
• Maintain a minimum overall GPA of 2.0 in courses taken during the current academic year
• Accumulate no more than five unexcused absences per class during the current academic year
• Maintain appropriate course progression as measured by the completion of weekly assignments
• Remain in good standing as a student of the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School

**Curriculum**

Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School students will take all courses required for graduation in an online or blended format using their school system issued MacBook Air and other digital resources.

All of the courses needed to earn an Alabama High School Diploma (except L.I.F.E. Physical Education) will be taken through the Alabama State Department of Education’s ACCESS program. These courses are taught in a fully online format by certified teachers provided by ACCESS. Career Preparedness, a new course required for students in the class of 2017 and beyond, is expected to be available in ACCESS in 2014.

L.I.F.E. Physical Education, which is a required course, will be taught by a certified teacher (employed by the Baldwin County Board of Education) using a blended format. The majority of the course will be offered online, but students will be required to report to the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance Learning Center for some face-to-face instruction and activities.

In addition to taking required classes through ACCESS, students may also take elective courses online such as art, foreign language, health, and career and technical education. Eligible students can earn additional elective credits by successfully completing pre-approved college courses through the Baldwin County Dual Enrollment and Senior Early Release program. Elective credit is also available for pre-approved internship and work experiences through the Baldwin County Community Workforce Development program.

**Student Assessment Program**

Students will be required to participate in all local and state mandated assessments. Students must sit for these assessments on the dates and times set by the Baldwin County Public School System in cooperation with the Alabama State Department of Education. These assessments will be given at the base high schools and/or the Digital Renaissance Learning Center. Students are required to provide their own transportation to the testing site.
Special Services

The Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School provides reasonable accommodations and student support services for special education students including those identified as gifted. However, it is the required I.E.P. or G.E.P. committee meeting that determines if the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School is the most appropriate environment for meeting the special education student's needs.

English Language Learners

The Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School will provide reasonable accommodations to English Language Learners according to Baldwin County Public School System guidelines.

Extracurricular Activities

School-sponsored extracurricular activities are not available at this time, but students are encouraged to submit proposals for school-sponsored clubs.

Athletics

Athletic programs are not available.

School Accountability

As a Baldwin County Public School, the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School will be responsible for all school accountability measures mandated by local, state, and federal authorities. Accountability data indicating student achievement and school success will be collected and reported.

Student Support Services

- **Digital Renaissance Learning Center**
  The Digital Renaissance Learning Center is the brick and mortar hub of the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School. It houses the administrative, guidance, and library media offices. The purpose of the learning center is to serve as a face-to-face support center for tutoring, training, counseling, and testing.

- **Orientation**
  Prior to enrolling in the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School, students will participate in a one week orientation that includes both online and face-to-face sessions. This orientation is designed to prepare students to successfully participate in online courses. It includes activities designed to help students communicate effectively via email and threaded discussions, to manage their own learning and their time, and to professionally seek additional resources and support for the purposes of academic remediation and enrichment.

- **Counseling**
  Students will be assigned a school counselor to support their academic and guidance counseling needs including the development of a four year high school plan based on the results from previous courses, standardized test scores, and career and interest inventories.

- **Monitoring**
  Baldwin County Digital Renaissance staff will regularly monitor student attendance, course progression, grades, and the appropriate proctoring of exams. Information will be communicated to both students and parents.
• **Tutoring**
  While students are encouraged to contact their online teachers via email and telephone for additional academic support, face-to-face tutoring, provided by the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School staff, is available at the Digital Renaissance Learning Center for students who need additional assistance. Students are also encouraged to utilize web-based resources provided by the Digital Renaissance such as iCurio, Istation, and Discovery Education for extra academic support.

• **Digital Resources**
  Assistance with locating and evaluating digital learning resources is available by contacting the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School library media specialist by email, telephone, or in person. Students are encouraged to participate in online and face-to-face learning sessions related to research, scholarly citations, plagiarism, digital citizenship, and other important topics provided by the library media specialist.

**Funding**

I propose funding for students enrolled in the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School will mirror Foundation ADM funding for a new high school.
BALDWIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

7/30/2013 5:00 PM

A special meeting of the Baldwin County Board of Education was held on Tuesday, July 30, 2013, at 5 p.m., at the CF Taylor Building in Robertsdale.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Norman Moore, Mr. David B Cox, Mr. David Tarwater, Mr. Elmer McDaniel, Mrs. Angie Swiger, Mrs. Shannon Cauley

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT: Dr. Alan T. Lee, Dr. Pam Henson, Mr. Terry Wilhite, Mrs. Jennifer Sinclair, Mr. John Chapman Wilson, Mr. Branton Bailey, Mrs. Suellen Brazil, Mr. Don Blanchard, Mr. Scotty Lewis

CALL TO ORDER

PRAYER  Mr. Wilhite opened the meeting with prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

The superintendent recommended the following amendments to the agenda: amend #5 Employment of Personnel; add #7 Approval of Virtual High School Concept.

Mr. McDaniel made a motion to accept the recommendation, seconded by Mrs. Swiger. Mr. Moore called for the vote. All voiced approval. Mr. Moore declared the motion carries.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

LEAVES OF ABSENCE OF PERSONNEL

The superintendent recommends adoption of a motion "to approve the leaves of absence of personnel as listed in the agenda exhibit."

Notes: Superintendent made recommendation as stipulated.

Motioned By: Mr. Elmer McDaniel

Seconded By: Mrs. Shannon Cauley

Action Taken: Passed Unanimously

RETIREMENT AND RESIGNATIONS OF PERSONNEL
The superintendent recommends adoption of a motion "to approve the retirement and resignations of personnel as listed in the agenda exhibit."

Notes: Superintendent made recommendation as stipulated.

Motioned By: Mr. Elmer McDaniel
Seconded By: Mr. David Tarwater
Action Taken: Passed Unanimously

**SUSPENSION OF PERSONNEL - UNPAID**

The superintendent recommends adoption of a motion "to approve the unpaid suspension of personnel as listed in the agenda exhibit."

Notes: Superintendent made recommendation as stipulated.

Motioned By: Mr. Elmer McDaniel
Seconded By: Mrs. Angie Swiger
Action Taken: Passed Unanimously

**TRANSFER/INTENT TO TRANSFER OF PERSONNEL**

The superintendent recommends adoption of a motion "to approve the transfer/intent to transfer of personnel as listed in the agenda exhibit."

Notes: Superintendent made recommendation as stipulated.

Motioned By: Mr. Elmer McDaniel
Seconded By: Mrs. Shannon Cauley
Action Taken: Passed Unanimously

**EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONNEL**

The superintendent recommends adoption of a motion "to approve the employment of personnel as amended and listed in the agenda exhibit."

Notes: Superintendent made recommendation as stipulated.

Motioned By: Mr. Elmer McDaniel
Seconded By: Mrs. Angie Swiger
Action Taken: Passed Unanimously
EXTRA WORK FOR EXTENDED PERIODS

The superintendent recommends adoption of a motion "to approve the extra work of personnel as listed in the agenda exhibit."

Notes: Superintendent made recommendation as stipulated.

Motioned By: Mr. Elmer McDaniel

Seconded By: Mrs. Shannon Cauley

Action Taken: Passed Unanimously

APPROVAL OF VIRTUAL HIGH SCHOOL CONCEPT

The superintendent recommends adoption of a motion "to approve moving forward with the Virtual High School concept as stipulated."

Notes: This item was added at the table. Superintendent made recommendation as stipulated.

Motioned By: Mr. Elmer McDaniel

Seconded By: Mr. David Tarwater

Action Taken: Passed Unanimously

SUPERINTENDENT AND STAFF REPORTS

1. Digital Renaissance Leadership Conference
2. Voluntary Drug Testing

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Swiger made a motion for the board to convene into executive session to discuss pending litigation, seconded by Mrs. Cauley. Mr. Moore called for the vote. All voiced approval. Mr. Moore declared the motion carries.

The board reconvened and adjourned at approximately 6:15 p.m.
Subject: VIRTUAL HIGH SCHOOL PUBLIC HEARING/INPUT LINK
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2013 10:10:47 AM Central Daylight Time
From: Baldwin County Public Schools
To: sharrison@bcbe.org

This e-mail has been sent to all parents of Baldwin County Public Schools whose e-mail addresses are on file – please forward to friends who may home school their children.

REMINDER: The Baldwin County Public School System is seeking Alabama State Department of Education approval to pilot the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School in the 2013-14 school year. A virtual school program administered through Baldwin County Schools, in partnership with the Troy State University ACCESS Support Center, will offer Baldwin County students flexibility and choice in customizing individual educational experiences. Baldwin County administrators associated with this pilot would like to schedule meetings with interested parents to present the plan, discuss student benefits, answer questions, and collect parental input. The purpose of this meeting is to gauge public support.

In addition to the public hearings, you can send us your feedback electronically.

Simply click this link to access the input form.

REMAINING PUBLIC HEARING DATES:

Tuesday, August 6, 2013

Foley Public Library - 2 p.m.

2nd Floor Meeting Room

Wednesday, August 7, 2013.

C.F. Taylor Auditorium (Adjacent to Robertsdale Elementary School)

4:30 p.m.

Baldwin County Public Schools would like to continue connecting with you via email. If you prefer to be removed from our list, please contact Baldwin County Public Schools directly. To stop receiving all email messages distributed through our SchoolMessenger service, follow this link and confirm: Unsubscribe.

SchoolMessenger is a notification service used by the nation's leading school systems to connect with parents, students and staff through voice, SMS text, email, and social media.