



**Board-to-Board, June 2022**

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*A monthly report from the Albemarle County School Board to the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors*

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***Dr. Daphne Keiser Is the Division's Next Assistant Superintendent for School Community Engagement***—The Albemarle County School Board has approved the appointment of Dr. Daphne Keiser as the division's new Assistant Superintendent for School Community Engagement, effective July 1. Dr. Keiser succeeds Dr. Bernard Hairston, who retired at the end of June.

Dr. Keiser was formerly the school division's Director of Talent, where her primary responsibilities included the recruitment and hiring of employees across the school division, including as many as 200 or more teachers each year; leading the search process for new administrators for the division's 25 schools; and succession planning at the school and central office levels. One area where Dr. Keiser's leadership has had a substantial impact this year was in expanding the diversity of the division's faculty. This year, following several initiatives designed by Dr. Keiser, almost 20% of new hires were teachers of color, which represented an increase of 70% from the prior year.

In her new role, Dr. Keiser will lead the implementation of such strategic plan values as family and community partnerships and goals that include affirming and empowering communities and making possible equitable and transformative resources for all students. Dr. Keiser will direct the Office of Family and Community Partnership, the Office of Strategic Communications, and the school division's equity education specialists and volunteer and outreach programs.

Dr. Keiser's operational responsibilities will include leading the division's equity and diversity policies and its programs to embed best practices that eliminate the achievement gap among all student enrollment groups. Such programs include the division's highly-heralded culturally responsive teaching program, in which teachers develop and apply strategies and practices that align with how each student learns based upon their culture and life experiences.

In fully realizing the promise of the division's strategic plan, *Learning for All*, Dr. Keiser's responsibilities include:

- Directing the implementation of the division's anti-racism policy;
- Expanding culturally responsive teaching and leadership programs to close achievement gaps;
- Working with schools and departments to establish, maintain and grow strategic partnerships with families, businesses, civic organizations, government representatives, and colleges and universities;

- After three years of the pandemic, revitalizing the division's volunteer program to support schools; and
- Redesigning the division's outreach to students, families and residents to increase opportunities for input, with a concentration on historically underserved communities.

At CATEC, Dr. Keiser was instrumental in establishing business advisory councils, enhancing student access to career development opportunities, and in strategic planning that resulted in the formation of several career academies. She also served as the principal for two elementary schools in the Charlottesville City school division: Burnley-Moran and George Rogers Clark, where students made significant academic gains, particularly Black students, students with disabilities, those from economically disadvantaged homes, and English Learners.

She began her career as an elementary school teacher in Sussex County and later was a supervisor with UVA's Graduate School of Education.

Dr. Keiser's career in education spans 24 years, 13 of them in senior leadership roles. Among the organizations she has served during her career are Virginia's Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the American Educational Research Association, the Board of the African-American Teaching Fellows, Women Education Leaders in Virginia, and the Virginia Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals.

***School Board Approves Appointment of New Principals for Henley Middle School, Hollymead Elementary School***—The Albemarle County School Board recently approved the appointment of two new school principals in the division. Effective today, LaRuth Ensley is the new principal of Henley Middle School and Joe McCauley is Hollymead Elementary School's new principal.

Ms. Ensley is succeeding Beth Costa, who became Monticello High School's principal last month. Ms. Ensley joins the division after serving for three years as the assistant principal of Falling Creek Middle School in Chesterfield County Public Schools. She previously chaired the English Department for Armstrong High School in Richmond Public Schools, and from 2006 through 2015, she was on the faculty of several community colleges and online universities.

Falling Creek Middle School has approximately 1,400 students, while Henley is the division's largest middle school, with nearly 900 students. Ms. Ensley has an extensive background in strategic planning, community outreach, and professional development with staff. She will bring strong interests in mentoring students and staff to Henley and in programs that build planning and organizational skills that prepare students for college and career success.

Ms. Ensley is working toward her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership, Policy, and Justice from Virginia Commonwealth University, and she holds an Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree from The George Washington University. She earned both a master's and an undergraduate degree from Old Dominion University. She began her career in education as an English teacher for Suffolk Public Schools in 2001.

Mr. McCauley joins Albemarle County Public Schools after having served as the principal of Ogden Avenue School in La Grange, IL, which is located about 15 miles southwest of Chicago.

He led the implementation of increased rigor in the curriculum at the high-performing school; prioritized equity-based practices, including improved Response to Intervention systems of support for students; and joined with parents and teachers in expanding classroom technology resources.

McCauley is a 1997 undergraduate of the University of Kansas. He holds a master's degree in Special Education from Northeastern Illinois University and a master's in Educational Leadership from Roosevelt University. He began his career in education as a Chicago Public Schools teacher for students in grades 5-12 and served nine years as a special education teacher at Molloy Education Center in Morton Grove, IL. Prior to becoming Ogden's principal, he served as an assistant principal supporting three elementary and middle schools.

McCauley is succeeding Craig Dommer, who has been appointed as the school division's Director of Instructional/Tiered Services.

Both Ensley and McCauley will begin their transitions immediately and will be relocating to their new schools by the middle of this month.

***Outdoor StoryWalk at Brownsville Elementary School Headlines 2022-23 Shannon Foundation Grants Supporting Innovative School Projects***—Ten Albemarle County Public Schools teachers have been awarded grants by the Edgar and Eleanor Shannon Foundation for Excellence in Public Education. The grants, which total just over \$15,000, will support innovative programming in county elementary, middle and high schools in the 2022-23 school year. According to the foundation, teachers who have received grants each year have documented increases in student test scores and a greater enthusiasm for learning.

One of the major projects funded this year was designed by Gay Baker, the media specialist and librarian at Brownsville Elementary School. Baker will use her \$5,000 grant to create a StoryWalk exhibit on school grounds.

While the walk will receive plenty of use during the school day by all grade levels, pre-K through 5, Baker said she hopes that families and children will use the walk even when school is not in session. In building the displays, she would like to partner with community service organizations, such as Eagle Scouts. Stories that will be featured could be shared online with families, and among future enhancements, Baker notes, could be the addition of sound and other interactive features to enhance quality of learning.

Two other teachers, Susi Page from Red Hill Elementary School, and Lisa Boyce from Henley Middle School, also received Level Two project grants. With her grant of \$4,169, Page plans a raised garden to become part of Red Hill's outdoor learning space. Students will have the opportunity for hands-on learning in caring for plants and animals and in interacting with them in their natural environment. Boyce will receive \$2,253 to design science laboratory projects that incorporate concepts in science, technology, engineering, art and math to create greater student confidence and enthusiasm.

Six Shannon Grants were awarded through Level One funding:

- At Western Albemarle High School, Meghan Streit will receive \$750 and ask students to assist in researching, reading and analyzing books that can be added to the school library. This is the second year of a project that began last year when Streit collaborated with students to select great American stories that became part of classroom libraries curated by students.
- Hollymead Elementary School's Catherine Simpson will use her \$750 grant for an outdoor playground for special education students that will utilize sensory and active play materials to promote fine motor skills and to increase their interaction with one another.
- Two Burley Middle School educators, Tina Goode and John Worozbyt, will share a \$700 grant to develop opportunities for science students to build such devices as rockets, solar ovens, derby cars, and kites as a pathway to enriching problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork.
- Angie Foreman also is taking a scientific approach to learning at Stone-Robinson Elementary School, using her grant of \$698 to install a garden pond, where students will employ their observational skills to learn about ecosystems, life cycles, food chains, and environmental stewardship.
- At Mountain View Elementary School, Lori Brodhead will apply her award of \$378 to create a sensory learning station for students in the Bright Stars preschool program.
- And, Anne Straume will work with third graders at Meriwether Lewis on a project titled, *Eaten Alive!*, through which students will research how such plants as the Venus flytrap interact with their environment to sustain their life.

The Shannon Foundation for Excellence was established in 1990 to fund projects by public school teachers in the city and county that represent innovative programming. The Foundation is named for University of Virginia President Emeritus Edgar F. Shannon, Jr., and his wife Eleanor in honor of their contributions to public education over many years.

This year, the Foundation is also funding three projects that total \$6,938 for Charlottesville City Schools educators. Overall, grants this year for both county and city school divisions total \$21,946.