



**Board-to-Board, June, 2023**

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

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***New Assistant Superintendent for Instruction hired***—Dr. Chandra Hayes, Director of Equity and Student Support Services for Chesterfield County Public Schools, the fifth largest school division in Virginia with nearly 65,000 students, will be the next Assistant Superintendent for Instruction for Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS). The appointment is effective July 1, when Hayes will succeed Debora Collins, who announced her retirement earlier this year.

Hayes' broad range of operational and strategic experience includes serving as the Dean of Students for Chesterfield County Public Schools and later as an assistant principal with Hanover County Public Schools, where she coordinated programming for a specialty center focused on career pathways for health sciences, STEM, and public safety. She also directed Hanover's Regional Governor's School for Career and Technical Advancement. In her most recent leadership position, returning to Chesterfield County Public Schools, she supervised professionals in such vital student support areas as counseling, school psychology, social work, health services, pre-K education, equity, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). These support areas are prioritized in *Learning for All*, the strategic plan for Albemarle County Public Schools.

As Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Hayes will be responsible for collaboratively implementing all curriculum and instructional programs and practices; working directly with principals on staffing plans; teaming with the Office of Strategic Planning, Accountability & Research, and Program Evaluation on the development of student performance assessments and goals; partnering with the Director of Professional Development to align division-wide professional learning offerings with the division's instructional strategies; leading the division's instructional coaching program; and supervising Special Education and Student Services, federal programs, and intervention supports.

Among the most immediate priorities for Hayes, the superintendent emphasized, is the successful implementation of the recommendations of an audit of instructional strategies, programs and resources completed by Bellwether Education Partners. Bellwether is a national education research and analysis organization that advises education practitioners in the public and private sectors. Bellwether presented its findings to the Albemarle County School Board at the board's June 8 meeting.

Also prominent among Hayes' responsibilities will be preparing the division for the updated curriculum requirements of the Virginia Literacy Act, passed by the Virginia General Assembly in 2022. Beginning with the 2024-25 school year, the new requirements include basing

instruction in the earliest grades on evidence-based instruction and intervention, expanding at-home resources for parents to support their child's reading progress, and the development by each school division in the Commonwealth of a literacy plan for instruction, intervention support, and professional development.

Hayes earned her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership & Policy Studies from Virginia Tech, and she holds a master's degree in Secondary Science Education from City College of New York. She received her undergraduate degree in Secondary Science Education from East Carolina University. Hayes began her career in 2003 as a high school science teacher in Chesterfield. She also taught science at the Urban Assembly School for the Performing Arts and at the Bronx Leadership Academy, both in New York City, before returning to Virginia in 2011.

***New Principals appointed for Baker-Butler, Murray Elementary Schools***—Two experienced school leaders have been approved by the Albemarle County School Board as new principals effective July 1. Brad Handrich, who has been an assistant principal at two elementary schools, will be Baker-Butler's new principal, and Wendy Eckerle, who has served three elementary schools as an assistant principal, will be the new principal for Murray Elementary School.

Handrich has been a teacher and reading interventionist for schools in Colorado and South America, and for Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS), where he earned certification in culturally responsive teaching in 2018. During his career, he has led school improvement teams and professional development workshops.

Handrich is succeeding Seth Kennard, who was recently named the next principal of Mountain View Elementary School. Most recently one of two assistant principals at Mountain View, Handrich also was an assistant principal for Greer.

Having served as Greer Elementary School's assistant principal for the last five years, Eckerle previously was an assistant principal for Brownsville and Baker-Butler elementary schools. Eckerle began her career with ACPS as a teacher for Brownsville and a teacher and literacy specialist for Meriwether Lewis Elementary School. For eight years, she oversaw summer school programming for both Brownsville and Crozet elementary schools before being appointed an assistant principal for Brownsville in 2014.

Eckerle is among the 4% of all teachers in the United States who are National Board certified. She is a former Phi Delta Kappa teacher of the year and a Golden Apple Award recipient, and she holds a certification in culturally responsive teaching.

Eckerle succeeds C'ta DeLaurier, who was recently named as the new principal of Woodbrook Elementary School.

An undergraduate of the University of Northern Colorado, Handrich earned his Bachelor of Arts in Bilingual and Bicultural Education, and he earned his Master of Arts in Administrative Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Colorado in Denver. He holds professional licenses in administration and supervision, elementary education, and English as a Second Language.

Eckerle is an undergraduate of Central Michigan University, holding a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. She received her master's degree in Elementary Reading and Literacy from Walden University, and she holds an endorsement from the Virginia School-University Partnership's Leadership Preparation Program.

**2023-24 Shannon Foundation grants announced**—A dozen 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 over \$21,000, will support innovative programming in county elementary, middle and high schools in the 2023-24 school year. According to the foundation, teachers who receive Shannon grants each year have documented both greater enthusiasm for learning among students and higher test scores.

One of the major projects funded for next year was designed by Tracy Brown of Crozet Elementary School and will teach students at the school to use drumming as a non-verbal way to evoke and express emotions. Of the “Drumming to Discover” program, Brown said, “Students will learn to appreciate drumming as a channel for reflection on cultural influences locally, nationally and globally. They will also develop a deeper understanding of drumming as a cross-cultural means to connect, communicate and discover.”

That program received \$4,615, the largest grant award to a county teacher.

Two other teachers, Hope Caplan, also from Crozet Elementary, and Chelsea Lundgren from Mountain View Elementary, received project grants. With her \$4,200 award, Caplan will purchase a new kiln for Crozet that will support the school's art program. In her proposal, she emphasized the importance of sculpture in building language, social skills, problem-solving abilities, and both gross and fine motor skills. Lundgren's \$1,844 grant will support Mountain View's third, fourth, and fifth graders by providing a 3D printer to bring their designs to life. Students will engage in active study and problem-solving supplemented by consultation via Zoom with engineers and experts who use 3D printed solutions for real-life problems.

The largest award, \$5,000, was for John Baran's “Strike Up the Band... Saw” proposal. Baran, an instructor at CATEC, the county and city's shared career and technical school, will help students gain proficiency in the use of the bandsaw as a tool that promotes their mastery of skills in the building trades. Students will utilize the bandsaw to create professional-quality products that the community can purchase, with proceeds donated to a student activities fund for career and technical classes.

Eight other program ideas were selected for funding:

- At Center I, Amanda Blevins's “Blogging to Leverage Student Voice” will receive \$750 to support seniors in becoming more confident and competent writers by analyzing Hanif Abdurraquib's National Book Award-winning essays in *They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us*.

- Chelsea Castro Fitzgerald of Greer Elementary was awarded \$750 for her “Building Community” concept, which will allow moderately to severely disabled students to benefit from an inclusive, hands-on, real-life learning and social experience through the use of a café cart to deliver coffee and snacks throughout their school building.
- Second graders at Crozet Elementary will use air cannons, a fog generator, gallium, and ampoules of noble gasses to learn concepts that are difficult to master through experimentation. They will participate in teacher Daniel Bowman’s “What’s the Matter with Matter” program at the school, which is receiving \$415.
- At Red Hill Elementary, kindergartners and first graders will be able to use manipulatives and a special table that lights up from below to build observational, analytical, investigative, vocabulary, and fine motor skills. The “Learning in the Light Lab” proposal, by Beth Kavounas, will receive \$750, providing engaging and collaborative exploration time.
- Western Albemarle High’s Cassidy Girvin will make it possible for photography students to use macro photography to take photos of small items and reproduce them in a large format with the purchase of a macro-specific lens through her grant “Macro Photography,” awarded \$650.
- In the grant “Community and Career Exploration with C-Case Students,” Lori Linville, also of Western Albemarle High, will facilitate regular library visits of C-Base students so they can engage in project-based inclusive activities with their non-disabled peers. Her grant is \$750.
- At Walton Middle, sixth graders will be able to use miles accumulated on under-desk cycles to track Lewis and Clark’s historic trail across the country through Kathryn Kurkee’s “Pedal Power” program, awarded \$723.
- Heather Campbell’s program, “Microscope Matters,” earned \$700 and will allow fifth graders at Woodbrook Elementary to use a teacher-created lab book, a microscope, and microscopic slides to conduct scientific investigation and analysis of the properties of the matter in the world around them.

The Shannon Foundation was established in 1990 to fund projects by public school teachers in Charlottesville City and Albemarle 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. Overall, grants this year for both city and county school divisions total \$24,128.