



Albemarle County Public Schools
401 McIntire Road
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902
Phone: (434) 296-5820
www.k12albemarle.org

April 24, 2017
Board-to-Board Report

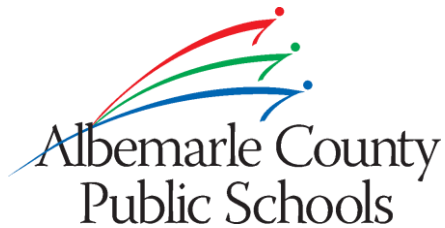
In early April the **School Board and Planning Commission** met for the first time in recent memory. Given the growth that Albemarle has seen in recent years, as well a recession that stalled some projects that were slated for development, the community at-large will benefit from a more integrated planning process when considering the building and locating of new school and community facilities. In addition to opening the lines of communication, this step also bore the fruit of data sharing. While the Planning Commission has access to useful data on myriad issues, their members were appreciative of the School Division's granular data collection regarding student demographics and their locations throughout the schools. By collaborating with the Planning Commission, the School Division will now be able to more effectively communicate the potential impacts or benefits that projects may or may not have on a community's neighboring educational facilities.

School Division officials often use phrases like *deep learning* and *authentic experiences* to describe the type of instruction our teachers deliver. While those phrases are useful in the abstract, during the month of April 2017 our students confirmed the concrete knowledge, skills, and competencies that our instructional philosophy has been guiding them toward. In other words, April was representative of the results a community can achieve with a commitment to student-centered instruction. Most notably was the recent awarding of the Emily Couric Memorial Scholarship to Ayoade Balgoun, a senior at Albemarle High School. Through project-based learning at the Math, Engineering, and Science Academy (MESA), as well internship learning at Northrup Grumman, Ayoade now applies her academic knowledge and life experience to the community by leading a summer engineering camp for middle school girls.

A visit to Monticello High School will show you students learning about the natural world through the mechanism of beekeeping. Science teacher Chris Stanek used his love for bees to launch the effort that now has the school playing home to 40,000 bees. In addition to learning first-hand about ecosystems and pollination, the students plan to harvest, bottle, and sell the bee's honey to support the program. At Walton Middle School, four girls have brought the natural world into the school building. To win first place at state level in the School NEXT Design Competition the girls presented a school organized around the theme of wellness, but with a biophilic design, which means it will have connections to nature. The girls recognized among their friends a need for greater levels of support around mental, emotional, and physical health, sought to address those needs with their school work.

Students from across the county are headed to **two global competitions** next month. Nine teams and 58 students will participate in the Destination Imagination Global Finals. Seven teams took first place in the state tournament, including three from Albemarle High School. Other first place finishers included teams from Brownsville and Meriwether Lewis elementary schools and Henley and Sutherland middle schools. Similarly, the 36th Annual Piedmont Regional Science Fair highlighted student work that not only leaps





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out of the classroom, but solves societal problems. Both Meg Richey, from Western Albemarle High School, and Mriganka Mandal, from Albemarle High School, won Grand Champion Awards. Meg developed a process for detecting peak pressure points on the feet of diabetic patients. It's been estimated that between \$9 billion and \$13 billion is spent each year on relieving problems associated with this condition. In her project, *Necrosis of Lung Adenocarcinoma by Targeting a Gamete-Specific Protein*, Mriganka studied the effect that an antibody drug conjugate can have on lung cancer cells. Her research showed that this process led to the death of cancer cells, offering the possibility of less harmful treatment than the current uses of chemotherapy or radiation. Surely it is the result of work that these, and many other students in Albemarle, are conducting that was cause for **Battelle's recent \$30,000 gift to support STEM education** in Albemarle County Public Schools.

The excellent work our teachers do each day will be recognized at the **2017 Golden Apple Awards**, which will be held Thursday, May 11 in Lane Auditorium. This year's keynote speaker is Dr. Pamela Sutton-Wallace, CEO of the University of Virginia Health System. This celebratory event will be followed by our **high school graduations**: Albemarle High, June 6 at John Paul Jones Arena; Monticello, June 7 at John Paul Jones Arena; Murray High, June 1 at Burley Middle School; and Western Albemarle, June 2 at WAHS.

