



Board-to-Board, January 2023

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

School Board votes to change the name of Meriwether Lewis Elementary School to Ivy Elementary School—Meriwether Lewis Elementary School (MLES) will become the fifth school in Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) to change its name after undergoing the school division's name review process. The Albemarle County School Board voted to change the name at its January 12 meeting, approving a recommendation from the division's superintendent, Dr. Matthew Haas. Haas selected Ivy Elementary School from among three names forwarded to him by the MLES Naming Review Advisory Committee. The name change will go into effect on July 1, 2023.

During the review process, the advisory committee solicited community input through two surveys, both of which included participation from fifth graders, and two public meetings. Four community members spoke at those meetings, and the committee received an additional 25 comments via email during the process. It also relied upon research from such local groups as the Virginia Tribal Education Consortium, Albemarle-Charlottesville Historical Society, and the University of Virginia Corcoran Department of History. It held its second public meeting on November 29, when it discussed survey results and student involvement.

Survey results and other information related to the name review process can be found on the [Meriwether Lewis Elementary School Naming Review](#) web page.

The committee considered all of the information they acquired in determining whether Meriwether Lewis exemplified the ACPS values of equity, excellence, family and community, and wellness. Further deliberation included alignment with the ACPS [Anti-Racism Policy](#).

The first survey asked which criteria were important to consider in naming a school, and more than eight out of every 10 respondents chose location. Haas said that because the school is located in the heart of Ivy, and the Ivy Elementary name honors the school's strong connections and partnership with its local community.

The three names submitted to Haas by the community advisory committee were Ivy Elementary, Owensville Elementary, and Meriwether Lewis Elementary.

School music teacher Cheryl Wetmore-Simpson chaired a diverse advisory committee of 12 volunteers consisting of three staff, four parents of students at the school, and five community members who do not have children who attend Meriwether Lewis. Karen Waters, ACPS Director of Community Education, served as the project manager for the review process.

In total, 14 schools in ACPS were named after individuals when, in October of 2018, the school board directed that all have their names evaluated by community advisory committees. The purpose of the reviews is to ensure that all schools have names that align with the school division's values of equity, excellence, family and community, and wellness.

To date, including last night's decision, the school board has changed the name of five schools and retained the name of three. Summaries of all school name reviews can be accessed from the school division's [School Names Under Review](#) web page.

Community members with questions or suggestions about the name review process may consult the school division's [School Naming Review](#) website or email the school division at SchoolNamingReview@k12albemarle.org.

Baker-Butler's Vihaan Rastogi & Henley's Saurish Srimath Tirumala are spelling bee champions—It took more than a dozen rounds, as well as the participation of thousands of elementary and middle school students over the past few months, but the school division has crowned two Spelling Bee champions who will represent Albemarle County Public Schools in the next stop on the road to the national bee in Maryland. This was the 17th year of division-wide competition.

Vihaan Rastogi from Baker-Butler Elementary School and Saurish Srimath Tirumala from Henley Middle School are the two new champions. They will be joined by the second- and third-place winners in each of this week's divisional spelling bees at the Central Virginia Regional Spelling Bee, which will be held at Albemarle High School on March 11. The winner of the regional bee, which will include champions from eight other public school divisions and seven private schools, will qualify for the National Spelling Bee on May 31 – June 2 at Maryland's National Harbor.

Stone-Robinson's Graysen Wickline and Broadus Wood's Hanna Belander placed second and third in the elementary school bee. In the middle school bee, Audrey Ishler from Burley and Elis Worley from Walton were second and third.

Vihaan correctly spelled *ammunition* in the 14th round of the elementary school bee on Tuesday evening. *Ballyhoo* was the word that put Saurish over the top in the 13th round last evening to conclude the middle school bee.

Speaking of the 21 students who represented their respective schools, the lead coaches pointed out that the students' knowledge and interest in etymology prompted them to ask about and understand word derivations, definitions and context.

Even in a sophisticated technological world, the educators pointed out, being able to master language construction and to use words effectively to communicate complex concepts are lifelong learning capabilities that are fundamental to both academic and career success.

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation's largest and longest-running educational program, dating back to 1925. It promotes the bee as "inspiring the exploration of words, illuminating pathways to lifelong curiosity." Each year, more than 11 million students participate in the competition.

E.W. Scripps, the local TV station owner that administers the spelling bee, will televise the national bee on two of its own platforms: ION and Bounce. The competition also will stream online.

ACPS approves 2023-24 calendar—At their meeting on January 26, 2023, the Albemarle County School Board approved the official calendar for the 2023-24 school year. The approved calendar is available to view and print in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) on our division-level [Calendars](#) page. Under this calendar, the 2023-24 school year will open for students on **Wednesday, August 23, 2023**. For more information about the calendar development process, please visit our [2023-24 Calendar Development](#) web page.

The ACPS Calendar Committee is composed of teachers, parents/guardians, and school and central office administrators. Throughout the development process, the committee considered feedback from students, employees, families, and community members, and their work prioritized the following goals:

- Create a calendar that best supports the division's efforts to engage students, improve opportunities and achievement, and get the most productivity out of our resources.
- Enable time for professional learning and collaboration that supports, in particular, the division's strategies around culturally responsive teaching and professional learning communities.
- Build in time for teachers to work individually on such tasks as updating lesson plans, grading assignments, preparing materials, etc.
- Preserve two full weeks for Winter Break and one full week (the first week of April) for Spring Break.
- Limit the number of half-days for students.