



Board-to-Board

November, 2016

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

Legislative Luncheon & School Visits: The School Board held its annual legislative luncheon at the end of November. Five of our six legislators were represented, with only Del. Fariss' office being unable to attend. The conversation focused on expanding broadband access, updating the Standards of Quality, and implementing authentic assessments—three concrete strategies for promoting equity and access, which are the driving force of this year's budget development process.

Following the lunch, Del. Steve Landes, Chair of the House Education Committee, visited two schools that are using innovative instructional approaches to engage students and increase academic performance. At Jack Jouett Middle School, Mr. Landes spoke with students and teachers in the AVID Program (Achievement Via Individual Determination), which was originally designed to work with students who will be first-generation college students. At Albemarle High School, teachers and students from the Team19 Program spoke to the Delegate about interdisciplinary instruction at the high school level, and how it has impacted student engagement.

Bond Referendum Update: Following the approval of the bond referendum last month, the school division has appointed members to the Learning Space Modernization Architectural/Engineering Selection Committee. These individuals will play a large role in the design and firm selection for the renovation/modernization of 19 classrooms, beginning in the Summer of 2017, and 40 classrooms plus 3 media centers in 2018. Architect Selection will be completed in November, and the Design process will continue through March, 2017. The construction bid process will be completed in April, 2017, for construction to begin in June, 2017.

Advocate for Education Award: Albemarle County School Board member Steve Koleszar was presented with the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) Advocate for Education Award at the closing session of the VSBA Annual Convention in November. This award recognizes school board members who have demonstrated significant and outstanding leadership, commitment, and contribution to public education that has had an impact on their region and the Commonwealth, and who have shown active involvement in local, state, and federal advocacy on behalf of their division, VSBA, and public education.

Koleszar has served on the Albemarle County School Board since January 1996. In addition to public service at the local level, Mr. Koleszar has advocated on behalf of students, teachers, and families at the state and federal levels. He frequently attends VSBA meetings and conferences, as well as National School Boards Association conferences. He has lobbied on behalf of students at the Virginia General Assembly and at the United States Congress.

State Music Education Association Award: Albemarle County Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Pam Moran, has received the 2016 Administrator of the Year Award from the Virginia Music Educators Association (VMEA). The Association is a statewide non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote the advancement of music education through schools and other educational institutions.

In its criteria, VMEA said that it selects an administrator of the year based upon “documented evidence that the nominee has been a major factor towards the success of a music program.” It said examples of support include securing resources to ensure the strength and broad opportunities of program offerings as well as the advocacy and support of professional development for music educators.”

Curriculum Leadership Award: On December 1, the Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (VASCD) named Debbie Collins, Executive Director of Instruction for Albemarle County Schools, its 2016 Curriculum Leader of the Year.

Panel on the Future of Education: Last month, Albemarle Superintendent Dr. Pam Moran participated in a panel to discuss the future of education, from preschool through college, in Charlottesville-Albemarle. Joining Dr. Moran were Teresa Sullivan, President of the University of Virginia, Piedmont Virginia Community College President Frank Friedman, and Charlottesville City Schools Superintendent Rosa Atkins. The panel was organized by the University of Virginia Student Government, and panelists highlighted the need for public schools, community colleges, and public universities to align curricula to better meet workforce needs.

Charlottesville Tomorrow Coverage: <https://goo.gl/ghojVd>

Social Media Coverage in the Media: Recently, we have received many questions from the media and the community about tweets made by Wes Bellamy, who is a teacher at Albemarle High School, Vice-mayor of Charlottesville, and sits on the Virginia Board of Education. Dr. Kate Acuff, Chair of the Albemarle School Board, has issued the following statement to the media, and has drafted a letter to the editor of the Daily Progress:

“We appreciate the concerns of those who have contacted our school division regarding social media postings that have been attributed to Mr. Wes Bellamy, a teacher at Albemarle High School. Many of these postings contain extremely vulgar and offensive language that directly contradicts the values of our school division. The School Board rejects these statements in their entirety.

In accordance with both School Board policies and the requirements of due process, we are working to completely gather all of the facts in this matter. As is standard procedure while an investigation is underway, and in the best interests of all who are involved, we agree with Mr. Bellamy’s decision to take administrative leave until such time as our investigation has been completed.”

School Board website: <http://www2.k12albemarle.org/Pages/default.aspx>