



**Board-to-Board, March, 2023**

---

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

---

***Division-wide instructional audit***—After completing the request for proposals (RFP) process, Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) has chosen [Bellwether](#), a nonprofit educational consultancy firm, to complete a division-wide audit of its educational programming, practices and resources, with a primary focus on reading and math instruction in elementary schools and Algebra 1 instruction in secondary schools.

The audit follows the release last fall of 2022 Standards of Learning (SOL) test scores showing that, while overall division test scores matched or surpassed state averages, the pass rates for several student demographic groups were well below those averages. For example, our Black and Hispanic students' test scores were 10% below the state's average in their peer group, while pass rates for students from economically disadvantaged homes were 8% lower than their peer group across Virginia.

As a result, ACPS Superintendent, Dr. Matthew Haas, called for an outside review and analysis of the division's instructional programs. A volunteer task force of teachers, families, instructional specialists, and parents helped formulate the proposal that resulted in the selection of Bellwether. The same task force will review the results of the audit and present recommendations to the Albemarle County School Board.

In its proposal, Bellwether said it will work in partnership with the school community to “deeply assess how students of color experience the district, its schools, and classroom instruction; identify what is contributing to those experiences; and make recommendations for strategic actions to close the gap between current learning outcomes for students of color and outcomes that students of color and their family desire for themselves.”

The audit will include a review of instructional materials; resources; classroom visits at 11 schools; an analysis of test scores; and a series of focus group discussions separately with teachers, students and parents. Included in its deliverables will be a root cause analysis that will “translate key themes and trends among data into insights and implications for how the division can improve learning outcomes for students of color.”

Bellwether will deliver audit findings to the task force, which will present their recommendations for improvements to the division's executive leadership team and the school board.

For more information on the process, and to access updates, visit the division's [Instructional Practices Audit](#) web page.

***Principals retiring***—Four ACPS principals have announced their upcoming retirement or transition into new roles. Cyndi Wells, currently the principal of Mountain View Elementary School, will be transitioning into the role of principal at Scottsville Elementary School where Art Stow, who announced his retirement prior to the start of the 2022-23 school year, has served this year as Scottsville’s interim principal. Jason Crutchfield, principal of Brownsville Elementary, will be retiring from his role as principal there. Angela Stokes, principal of Stone-Robinson Elementary, and Kristen Williams, principal of Woodbrook Elementary, will also be retiring from their roles. These changes will take effect on July 1.

***Science fair winner***—Albemarle High School sophomore Vidya Ambati is the 2023 Virginia Piedmont Regional Science Fair Grand Winner for her project, “Haloperidol Inhibits Inflammasome Activation and Reduces the Risk of Rheumatoid Arthritis.” She spoke of her project on a recent NBC29 Community Conversations [spot](#).

***Art award winner***—Brownsville Elementary School fifth grader Leah Salzberg won a statewide lottery contest sponsored by the Virginia Lottery. Her artwork will be featured on a postcard that will be sent in appreciation to every teacher in the state of Virginia, and the lottery also awarded her \$200 for her win. Additionally, the school has been awarded \$2,000 to support the purchase of art supplies for the school.

***Changes at the state level***—Lisa Coons, who serves as the chief academic advisor of the Tennessee Department of Education, will on April 17 take over the role of Superintendent of Public Instruction for Virginia, a role that was vacated when Jillian Balow resigned earlier this year.

Governor Glenn Youngkin has also announced that Jeremy Raley, who has served as superintendent in Goochland County Public Schools for more than seven years, will be the new chief of staff for the Virginia Department of Education. Youngkin has also appointed Dale Sturdifan, who has been a member of the Mecklenburg County School Board for over 11 years, as a member of the Virginia Board of Education.