



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

June 7, 2017
Board-to-Board Report

Yancey Elementary School Closure and Transition Plan

The Albemarle County School Board last month voted 5-2 to close Yancey Elementary School. This decision was based on declining enrollment (from 168 in 2007-8 to a projected enrollment of 108 in 2017-18); several years of low SOL scores; a loss of state accreditation in 2016 (preceded by being listed in 2014 as a priority school); a loss of funding for a turnaround project that featured a partnership with UVA's Curry School of Education; a loss of the state 21st Century Grant for Club Yancey, an afterschool enrichment program; the resignation and requests for reassignment by half of Yancey teachers recruited just two years ago for the turnaround project; and the request to transfer of Yancey's principal.

The ACPS Transportation Department studied the possible bus routes with a goal of keeping bus rides as short as possible (more than half of the students will have shorter routes, the average is within bus rides within the Division). Of Yancey's current students, 60 will be reassigned to Scottsville Elementary School, and 44 students will be reassigned to Red Hill Elementary School.

To aid the transition, and to ensure that all students impacted are set up for success in their new learning environments, Division staff have put the following measures in place. It should also be noted that ACPS staff have established a Transition Committee, which will manage the equitable movement of resources from Yancey to Red Hill and Scottsville. These resources include classroom furniture, classroom technology, and school library materials, etc.

For students:

- *Communication:* On May 30 Yancey students received letters stating which school they will attend next year.
- *New school visits:* On June 1 Yancey students visited Scottsville and Red Hill to make friends and familiarize themselves with the school buildings and teachers.
- *Letters:* During field trip, Yancey students received letters of welcome from the principals of Red Hill and Scottsville.
- *Class sizes:* Including the new students from Yancey, the average class size at both Red Hill and Scottsville will remain the smallest elementary class size averages in the division.
- *Open house:* Throughout the summer, both Red Hill and Scottsville will host numerous open house opportunities for students to visit.





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- *Summer school:* Yancey students who attend summer school will do so in their new school to enhance their familiarity with their new classmates and teachers and aid the transition to a smooth start in August.
- *PTO:* The Red Hill and Scottsville PTOs are planning welcome events for Yancey students and families.

For teachers:

- *Communication:* Yancey teachers have been notified of their new placements. Of the fourteen teachers who were on the staff at Yancey this school year, two have resigned and the remainder will have placements within the Division.
- *Professional development:* ACPS will offer professional development opportunities for the Red Hill and Scottsville teachers.

Building capacity:

- *Red Hill* received a school-wide renovation just last year, and has sufficient space to accommodate the Yancey students, although Phase II of the Red Hill plans, which include expanding its half-sized gymnasium, may need to move up on the CIP priority list. Two trailers will continue to be used for such auxiliary services as ESOL, Speech, Family Support Workers, etc.
- *Scottsville* will require 2-3 additional K-5 classrooms to easily accommodate the additional 60 students. One classroom now being used for other purposes can be utilized, and with the new security entrance project (which was part of the Referendum projects) another classroom would be created. The School Board has asked for information about modifying the RFP to add an additional classroom. For the short term, like many other schools in the Division, Scottsville may have to utilize trailers.

Afterschool Programming

Two years ago, the oversight of all Extended Day Enrichment Programs in the state was moved from the Virginia Department of Education to the Department of Social Services. One unintended consequence of this was a significantly different set of regulations governing the program. These new regulations translated to a situation where the school facilities that were used for Pre-K-5 education during school hours now failed to meet the DSS requirements for afterschool programs for Pre-K-5. A bill that would have eliminated these burdensome challenges—SB1239—was vetoed by the Governor. While we were disappointed with this legislative outcome, with the help of the offices of Del. Toscano and Sen. Deeds, the Governor heard, and was receptive to, our concerns. As a result, the Governor directed the Commissioner of Social Services to work with local school divisions to provide regulatory flexibility. On June 3, Division





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staff travelled to Richmond and met with DSS Commissioner Schultze to discuss the matter further. The outcome is still pending.

Legislator Visit

Senator Bryce Reeves is scheduled to attend the July 13 School Board meeting. At that time, the Senator will present Steve Koleszar with Senate Joint Resolution 329, which honors Mr. Koleszar for being named the 2017 Virginia School Boards Association's Education Advocate of the Year award. The resolution states that Mr. Koleszar "is known for his "kids first" approach, and [that] his love and passion for public education is evident to anyone whom he encounters." Members of the Board of Supervisors and local government staff are welcome to attend the meeting, which will begin at 6:30 p.m. in Lane Auditorium.

Staffing Update:

- *Elementary & Middle School Principals:* Craig Dommer, currently the principal of Yancey Elementary School, has been appointed as an assistant principal at Henley Middle School; LaTishia Wilson will be transferring from Henley to Greer Elementary School as its assistant principal. Both appointments will take effect on July 1. Prior to being appointed as Yancey's principal, Dommer was a lead instructional coach in Mathematics for all of the school division's 26 schools. Wilson also is a UVA graduate, where she received her Bachelor of Arts. She holds a master's degree in Special Education from the University of Phoenix and an Education Specialist degree from Regents University.
- *High School Principals:* Dr. Jesse Turner, who has been the principal of Monticello High School since 2012, has been named principal of Albemarle High School. Dr. Turner is a former assistant principal at Albemarle High School. Under Dr. Turner's leadership, Monticello won the National School Boards Association's prestigious Magna Award for program excellence, and the school increased its on-time graduation rate, reaching 100 percent for African-American students in recent years.
- *Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning:* ACPS has appointed Debbie Collins, its Executive Director of Student Learning, as its Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning. Ms. Collins' management responsibilities will include oversight of all curriculum, staffing, budget, special education, and federal programs for the school division's 26 schools. Ms. Collins currently is the Curriculum Leader of the Year for the state of Virginia, having been selected for the award by the Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- *Director of Secondary Education:* Jay Thomas, who has served as the principal of Albemarle High School since 2009, has been appointed as the school division's Director of Secondary Education. Thomas' responsibilities will include the coordination of middle and high school curriculum,



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assessment, and instructional programs. He also will oversee extracurricular and athletic programs and provide leadership support for professional development programs, including instructional coaching teams.

- *SEAD Team Leader:* Dr. Nicholas Smith, who is Ivy Creek's principal, will be the team leader for the school division's new Social, Emotional and Academic Development (SEAD) program. This program is part of the school division's equity and access initiative, which will be piloted during the 2017-18 school year. The SEAD team is charged with removing learning barriers that correlate with social or cultural factors; creating inclusive multicultural school environments for adults and children; and cultivating the unique gifts, talents and interests possessed by every student. The program will be piloted during the new school year in the school division's four urban ring elementary schools, Agnor-Hurt, Cale, Greer, and Woodbrook. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students at these four schools ranges from 42 to 75.

Student Achievement

- *National Champions:* A team of six Jack Jouett Middle School students finished first in a national wind power competition last week. Middle schools students earned the right to compete by prevailing in regional contests in which students designed, built and operated their own wind turbines to generate electricity. The team was the subject of a recent NBC 29 news report: <https://goo.gl/jZFWAB>.
- A second all-female team from Jack Jouett also won an award for finishing first in the wind siting portion of the competition.

