



Board-to-Board

November, 2015

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

New Board Members—Three new representatives have been elected to the School Board. On November 11, Graham Paige—a former Albemarle County Public Schools teacher—was sworn in as the Samuel Miller Magisterial District’s representative on the School Board. Paige won a special election to fill the seat vacated earlier this year by Eric Strucko. Former School Board member Jon Stokes filled the seat in an interim capacity. Jonno Alcaro, co-owner of Meritage Financial Solutions and a parent of a student at Western Albemarle High School, won the at-large race, while Dave Oberg, an attorney with the Charlottesville-based firm Jones, Oberg & Green, won the White Hall Magisterial District race.

State Funding—According to an [article in the Richmond Times-Dispatch](#), the House Appropriations Committee is likely to propose fully funding the Virginia Retirement System in the upcoming two-year state budget, rather than by the 2018-2020 biennium. Doing so would represent a 10 percent increase to the 90 percent of recommended contributions currently being paid under a three-year-old budget agreement. Governor McAuliffe will present his two-year budget Dec. 17, for a legislative session to begin Jan. 13.

Redistricting—At the November 12 meeting, the School Board voted not to redistrict any students out of Greer Elementary School or Albemarle High School. Superintendent Moran forwarded her recommendations to the School Board at its October 22 meeting, endorsing most of the options from the Citizens Advisory Committee on Redistricting.

With respect to Greer—which is projected to be almost 100 students over capacity in three years—the Board directed staff to return with creative solutions in two months. The Board also discussed potentially adding-on to Albemarle High School, which is 100 students over capacity, is projected to be 200 students over capacity in five years, and marks a shift in philosophy from previous Boards, which wanted to cap Albemarle High at 2,000 students.

In addition, Board members also discussed the need for other additions in the northern urban ring—most notably at Woodbrook Elementary School—to alleviate overcrowding. Looking toward future capital projects, Board Chair Ned Gallaway submitted a letter to the Board requesting a bond referendum.

Accountability—The Standards of Learning Innovation Committee recently [published recommendations](#) aimed at revising the Commonwealth’s accountability system to better measure the skills students will need in the 21st Century. The report is comprised of two statements of principle, as well as specific recommendations for each statement.

The first statement reads: “Virginia’s education system should prepare our students for success in post-secondary education, the workforce, and participation as productive citizens.” The second statement reads: “Appropriate changes to Virginia’s existing accountability system can occur by increasing the

state's emphasis on measures of individual student growth while rebalancing the emphasis on students passing standardized tests."

Governor's Council Appointment—Chad Ratliff, Director of Instructional Programs for Albemarle County Public Schools, has been appointed to the Governor's Council on Youth Entrepreneurship. Much of Chad's work focuses on youth entrepreneurship, and he is involved with *Startup Weekend EDU*, which is a weekend event aimed at helping students develop products and ideas.

Hungarian Delegation—Albemarle County Public School's maker curriculum was the draw for three Hungarian officials who visited schools earlier this month. Toth Gabor, Peter Fuchs, and Szilveszter Erdos said the instructional model is discussed and studied in Hungary, but that education officials there lack first-hand accounts of how the curriculum plays out in classrooms. As a result, the delegation toured elementary, middle, and high school classrooms to see the model at work. Of the group's major takeaways, they cited students teaching each other content, student confidence and maturity, and the trust built with students when they are given ownership of their educational path through content.

[Daily Progress coverage](#) of the Delegation.

[NBC29 coverage](#) of the Delegation.

Filmmaker Visit—Ted Dintersmith, nationally renowned filmmaker and advocate for education, visited Agnor-Hurt Elementary School and Albemarle High School earlier this month. Dintersmith's visit preceded the Virginia Film Festival's screening of his documentary "Most Likely to Succeed," which asks if the current state of public education is preparing students for a rapidly-changing economy that is seeing jobs once done by people, automated.

New Principal Search—After serving as principal of Brownsville Elementary School for five years, India Haun has been appointed as the Director of Accountability & Research for Albemarle County Public Schools. Filling Haun's former role in an interim capacity will be Barbara Edwards, a former principal who retired from Broadus Wood after 12 years of service. Brownsville will now begin a search for a new principal, with a survey being distributed to gather the community's input on the qualities they most value in a new building leader.

Virginia School Boards Association—The School Board and members of staff attended the annual VSBA conference in Williamsburg, VA, attending lectures and breakout sessions on a variety of important education topics. Monticello High School principal Dr. Jesse Turner, along with library media specialist Joan Ackroyd, represented Albemarle County Public Schools with a presentation about the school's Learning Commons, which saw student visits jump from 400 per year to more than 71,000 per year.

Anti-discrimination Policy—The School Board updated language in its anti-discrimination policy for both employees and students, adding protections for sexual and gender identity. The changes will protect employees from discrimination, such as personnel decisions, based on sexual or gender identity. For students, the added protections will allow all students, regardless of gender or sexual identity, access to all school programs, activities, services, and facilities, including bathrooms.

Diary of Anne Frank—The Western Albemarle Players earlier this month presented “The Diary of Anne Frank.” First performed on Broadway in 1955, Western Albemarle High School drama director Caitlin Pitts said she selected the play because of its “powerful messages about the brutality that can exist in our world.” Proceeds from the performance will support a theater workshop for students next spring in New York City.

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