



Board-to-Board

February, 2018

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

State Revenues—Both houses in the General Assembly eliminated the hold harmless funding in the Governor’s proposed budget that would have partially offset the projected two-year \$6 million reductions in state revenues caused by the increase in our composite index. This is the crossover period in the General Assembly’s session when each house considers each other’s legislation. We are concerned that following crossover, this \$1.9 million in hold harmless funding for our school division will not be restored. Several other school divisions in the state, including Charlottesville City, also are adversely affected by this cut. It is possible the Governor will restore this funding when the General Assembly sends its budget to his office. We are informing our state legislators of the significant financial consequences to our taxpayers of these cuts.

The jump in our composite index was based upon a \$1.1 billion increase in adjusted gross personal income in Albemarle during 2015. Nearly \$1 billion of this was earned by fewer than 100 individuals. It is likely that absent a repeat of this scenario, our composite index will decline in two years.

School Safety—The school shootings in Florida on Valentine’s Day has generated several inquiries from parents and the media about how [we keep students and staff safe in our schools](#) (click for a list). Our Board will consider at its March 8th meeting, two additional measures—an expansion of our use of bullet-resistant film over door windows in all classrooms (about 25 percent of classrooms now have this film) and the installation of window coverings on all classroom windows to prevent intruders from seeing inside a classroom. These improvements would cost approximately \$350,000 and be paid for from savings from our health care program and would be completed in time for the new school year.

Personnel Updates—The School Division now is engaged in two searches to fill senior positions. The first is to appoint a successor to Dean Tistadt, who is retiring as the division’s Chief Operating Officer, effective June 30th. The second is to fill the leadership position in our technology department now led on an interim basis by Ira Socal. Also this month, the Division appointed two principals — Doug Granger moves from interim principal to principal at Agnor-Hurt Elementary School and Megan Wood, now an assistant principal at Albemarle High School, will become Sutherland Middle School's principal on July 1.

Wintersongs—One of the more powerful ways in which our students partner with community service organizations is the annual Wintersongs a cappella concert. Female vocalists from 11 schools in Central Virginia, including Albemarle High School and Burley, Henley, Jouett, Sutherland and Walton Middle Schools from our school division, raised nearly \$4,000 this year to support the Shelter for Help in Emergency. Wintersongs was organized four years ago by the music director at Burley as a way to positively respond to violence against women in the Charlottesville and Albemarle communities. The concert was held at Monticello High School on February 25th. This is the fourth annual concert and during the four years, students have raised \$14,000 for the shelter.

Spelling Bee—Sixth-grader Layla Boubier from Henley Middle School won our 13th Annual School Division Spelling Bee. This will be her third trip to the regional finals, which will be held on March 3 at Albemarle High School. Seven other students representing Baker-Butler, Cale, Hollymead, Meriwether Lewis, and Murray Elementary Schools, as well as Sutherland and Walton Middle Schools will join her for the right to earn a trip to the national finals in May at National Harbor in Maryland.

New Honor for Students—Beginning this May, high school seniors will be able to earn designations of *cum laude*, *magna cum laude* and *summa cum laude* on their diplomas. The designations will be based upon unweighted grade point averages ranging from 3.0 to 3.8 and higher.

National Award—Four students from the Center of Student Learning and Growth have won a national competition against students from more than 20 other schools, many of them magnet schools for film and the arts. The Albemarle students earned top honors for their 360-degree virtual reality film that examined the events of August 12, 2017 in Charlottesville. One of the student winners said of the film, “I didn’t think the media and others had an accurate picture of our community from those events and one of the reasons we did the film was to tell a story of the many outstanding qualities of our community.

South American Students Visit—As part of a U.S. State Department sponsored program, administered locally by the University of Virginia, a delegation of 26 teachers and four teachers from Chile and Argentina will meet with Monticello High School students on March 21. The Youth Ambassadors’ Program seeks to increase the understanding of the U.S. educational system of students from South American countries, who then take those experiences back to their native schools. This is the fifth year that a South American delegation of students has visited our schools to talk with our students. In recent years, a focus has been on schools as contributors to the well-being of their surrounding communities.

Energy Performance Contract—ACPS has signed a contract with Ameresco, an energy efficiency and renewable energy company, to provide infrastructure improvements to 22 of our 25 schools. The energy efficiency program is being financed through federal energy conservation bonds, carrying an interest rate of 1.04 percent. The company will complete the installation of LED lighting in all classrooms and common spaces throughout our schools and exterior areas. Also included are low-flow water retrofits at 17 schools to conserve water use. The program will produce nearly \$9 million in operational cost savings over 12 years, \$7.5 million of which will be paid to Ameresco for their work. Annual savings after that will continue to accrue to the school division. The projects also will reduce the division’s carbon footprint by 3,500 tons per year.

Destination Imagination--At the February 17 regional tournament held at Monticello High School, 16 of our 26 student teams qualified for the *Destination Imagination* state tournament on March 24 at Atlee High School in Mechanicsville. Eight teams placed first in their categories, including three teams from Henley, two from Brownsville and teams from Albemarle High School, Crozet and Walton. Teams can qualify at the state tournament for the Global Finals over the Memorial Day weekend at the University of Tennessee. In 2017, the division sent 58 students and nine teams to that competition.

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