



Board-to-Board, November 2022

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

Citing personal reasons, David Oberg resigns from his White Hall magisterial seat on school board—David Oberg, who was first elected to the Albemarle County School Board in November of 2015 from the White Hall Magisterial District and who was re-elected in November of 2019, has submitted his resignation from the Board.

Oberg told Board Chair Graham Paige that while it has been an honor to represent White Hall residents for seven years, personal circumstances do not allow him the time he considers necessary to fully serve his constituents throughout the remainder of his term. The White Hall seat on the Board will be up for election in November of 2023. Oberg's resignation takes effect on December 31 of this year.

Paige said at the November 10 School Board meeting that the Board will make an appointment in December to fill the remaining year of Oberg's term. He invited residents of the White Hall district who were interested in serving on the School Board to submit an application, including a resume and a letter describing their interest. Applications were due on November 18.

The Board will conduct public interviews of all candidates at a special meeting on Thursday, December 1, and is expected to appoint a successor to Oberg following a public hearing on December 15. The new Board member will take office on Sunday, January 1, 2023.

During his tenure on the Board, Oberg has been a member of committees supporting CATEC and overseeing student discipline. He has been a forceful advocate for improving the division's market competitiveness in recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers and support staff and has supported removing barriers to educational and extra-curricular opportunities for all students.

"On behalf of our entire Board, I want to offer our deepest appreciation to Mr. Oberg for his support of our school division's emphasis on teaching not to a test but to the passions and individual learning styles of our students. His wisdom on such critically important issues as protecting the health and well-being of our students by removing harmful images from our schools and championing the student-led development of our anti-racism policy will benefit our division for a long time to come," Paige said.

"On a personal level, Mr. Oberg's friendship will be missed by all of his colleagues as will his occasional gentle guidance on parliamentary procedure. We all celebrate the contributions he and his family have made to our students, employees and schools over many years and wish he and his family the very best," Paige said.

In an email to Paige, Oberg said, “My heart, my prayers and my best wishes go with you, the Board, the amazing staff, administration, and most importantly the students and families of the Albemarle County Public Schools.”

To fill critical labor shortages, School Board approves near-term pay increases—Moving quickly to implement the findings of a comprehensive study and analysis of its ability to recruit and retain a high-quality workforce, the School Board, at their meeting on October 27, approved recommendations from the school division’s Human Resources department to move forward with a series of pay increases for key positions beginning in December.

The study and analysis were completed over several months earlier this year by Segal, an internationally-recognized management consultant firm specializing in competitive compensation and benefit systems for both private and public sector organizations.

Following a series of employee compensation increases that totaled 15 percent over the past 15 months, the study found that approximately 70 percent of all positions in the school division were at market levels. The increases approved last evening address several positions found to be below market and they will accelerate the division’s ability to fill vacancies in such critical need areas as school bus drivers, school nurses and the building trades.

The pay adjustments also begin to implement one of the three goals in the division’s strategic plan, Learning for All, which calls for the development of equitable and transformative resources in support of student learning. One of the goal’s strategies is a total compensation structure that makes the school division highly competitive in its recruitment and retention of highly skilled professionals.

This strategy has become even more urgent in the current economic climate when many private and public service employers are unable to fill key positions.

Among the salary increases that will go into effect on December 17 is a jump in the hourly pay of starting school bus drivers from just over \$16.50 at present to \$21.50. The division also is instituting a step scale for drivers, similar to that in place for teachers, that will include annual increases in compensation based upon years of experience. This is in addition to any salary increases adopted by the School Board for all employees.

School nurses who hold a Registered Nurse (RN) license, are moving into a higher pay grade effective December 17, from \$21.62 an hour to \$28.64 at the lower end of experience and at the higher end, from \$35.28 an hour to \$46.76.

Other positions characterized as hard to fill, meaning they have been attracting a small pool of applicants or remain unfilled for an extended period of time, also will have their hourly pay increased in December. These include, for instance, positions in Building Services, Technology and Transportation.

Several job categories, including office associates, maintenance mechanics and staff in transportation and child nutrition, will have their current job responsibilities evaluated for possible upgrades in their current pay scale classification.

A second phase of salary adjustments, taking effect on April 1 of next year, also was approved by the School Board. These adjustments impact several additional positions in Building Services, Technology, Finance, Child Nutrition, Communications and office associates. School psychologists, social workers and therapists are among those professionals who will be considered for salary adjustments in the division's next fiscal year budget.

Separately, at their November 10 meeting, the School Board approved a one-time \$1,000 bonus for employees to be disbursed in December. This consideration follows the state's decision to fund the bonus for some local school employees. The school division would supplement that funding to include all employees.

The Segal analysis included a list of school divisions and local governments that compete most directly with the school division for talent. The recommendation before the School Board reduces the current competitive market, which was established in the early part of this century, from 28 to 15 school divisions, the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County governments and the University of Virginia. Among the criteria used by Segal are organizations from which the school division hires, organizations that hire employees from the school division and an aspirational market, which represents organizations with which the school division seeks to compete.

In addition to compensation, the study also suggested the school division consider improvements to its benefit plans, which the division said would include opportunities for employee input.

The entire Human Resources presentation to the Board is available at:

<https://esb.k12albemarle.org/attachments/d487bbe1-e4fe-4d5f-b006-d66db9501447.pdf>

Meriwether Lewis Name Review Advisory Committee's second survey closed—Members of the Meriwether Lewis Elementary School community were recently encouraged to respond to a second survey seeking their perspectives on potential names for the school as part of the Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) naming review process. This survey asks participants to choose from among five possible school names: Blue Bird Elementary School, Discover/Expedition/Explorer Elementary School, Ivy Elementary School, Meriwether Lewis Elementary School and Owensville Elementary School. Meriwether Lewis topped the preference ranking. Those survey results can be viewed on the [Meriwether Lewis Elementary School Naming Review](#) web page.

The survey is part of a school naming review being conducted by a volunteer community advisory committee in accordance with a division-wide policy. The policy requires a community review of all schools in the division that are named for an individual to ensure those school names reflect the division's four values of equity, excellence, family and community, and wellness. The survey closed on Monday, November 21.

The first survey of two was released on October 25. More than 94% of respondents said they were familiar with the life and career of the school's namesake, Meriwether Lewis. The survey received responses from 421 people, including more than 200 Albemarle County Public Schools parents and employees, 148 community members, and 51 students. It also asked those who took the survey which naming categories were important to consider in naming a school. Location topped the list. Out of 409 name submissions, 362 suggested Meriwether Lewis Elementary.

During the November 9 public comment meeting, two people spoke in favor of keeping the current name, and none spoke against the current name or in favor of new names and no additional new names were suggested. Two people spoke to request the views of indigenous people and descendants of the enslaved are heard and acknowledged. Public feedback was also received through the schoolnamingreview@k12albemarle.org email address.

The Meriwether Lewis community advisory committee includes the school's principal, Jennifer Underwood, and assistant principal, Laura Morris, and is chaired by Cheryl Wetmore-Simpson, a teacher at the school. Four committee members are parents of students who attend the school, and five other members live in the school community but do not have students attending Meriwether Lewis. Two of those five are school alumni.

The committee will have its final meeting to discuss the survey results on Thursday, December 1. During this meeting, the committee will consider all the information obtained through public comment, survey results, and its own research.

The committee will send its name recommendation, along with all supporting evidence, to the school division's superintendent, Dr. Matthew Haas, and announce their choice on Thursday, December 8, at the Albemarle County School Board meeting. Haas will take the advisory committee's recommended name for the school under advisement and submit a formal recommendation to the board, who will make the final decision.

In all, 14 schools in the division will undergo a naming review. To date, naming reviews of seven schools in the division have been completed, resulting in four schools changing their name and three retaining the original name.

The advisory committee welcomes suggestions or questions about the review process at any time. All committee members can be emailed at SchoolNamingReview@k12albemarle.org.

Nominations Open for 2023 Golden Apple Awards—Once again, residents of Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville are being asked to help select local teachers for the Golden Apple Award next spring. From now until Monday, January 23, members of the community can nominate educators who demonstrate excellence and innovation in the classroom for the award, which includes a \$500 classroom grant.

The program, which began in 2001, honors outstanding teachers in public and private schools in Albemarle County and Charlottesville City. Sponsored by Better Living Building Supply & Cabinetry, the program recognizes educators from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade for their influence on the success of students.

Teachers are selected for a Golden Apple based on their demonstrated excellence in the classroom, their innovative instructional strategies and techniques, and their partnership with parents and other community members. Nominations can be made by students, parents, other members of the community, and educators. Online nomination forms are available on the Albemarle County Public Schools [Golden Apple Awards](#) web page.

One teacher will be selected from each of the 54 public and private schools and teaching programs in the city and county. Among the programs included, for instance, is the University of Virginia's Hospital Education Program and the county school division's Post High Program.

Nunley began the Golden Apple Program in partnership with local schools as a way to recognize the contributions of teachers not only to their students, but also to the business community. Nomination criteria include creating a love of learning among all students, stimulating thought and dialogue in the classroom, raising student expectations for success, understanding and providing for individual student needs, and involving families in the education process.

Each year, Golden Apple recipients are chosen by the Golden Apple Selection Committee. This committee includes former local educators and administrators from county, city and private schools. This year's committee also includes representatives from Uniserv and the African American Teaching Fellows.

Community members can visit k12albemarle.org/golden-apple to access the online nomination form as well as a printable form (in English and Spanish). The deadline for nominations is Monday, January 23, 2023. Nominations can be submitted online or through a printed form mailed to:

Golden Apple Coordinator
Albemarle County Office Building
401 McIntire Road, 3rd Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902

The ceremony recognizing our 2023 Golden Apple Award recipients will be held at Charlottesville City Schools' Martin Luther King, Jr. Performing Arts Center on Wednesday, May 3, 2023, beginning at 5:30 p.m.