



Board-to-Board

March 2017

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

Science Fair---At the 36th annual Piedmont Regional Science Fair held at JPJ this month, Albemarle County public school students earned 75 awards, including both Grand Champion awards. Mriganka Mandal, an Albemarle High School sophomore, won for her research into how to kill cancer cells without damaging other tissue and Western Albemarle's Meg Richey won for her invention of an orthotic sensor that can help detect foot ulcers in diabetic patients. She named her project for her school bus driver, who died following complications after foot surgery caused by such ulcers. Both students automatically qualified for an all-expenses paid trip to Los Angeles for the International Science Fair in May. Meanwhile, the Virginia State Science Fair is being held in Lexington a week from Saturday to determine other qualifiers for the international fair.

Destination Imagination—In a related project-based competition, 15 Destination Imagination teams qualified for the state tournament, in Mechanicsville, also a week from Saturday. Eight teams placed first in their category—three from Albemarle High School—one from Monticello and one from Sutherland, Henley, Jouett and Brownsville. Teams advancing past the state tournament will compete in the Global Championships in Knoxville, TN, also in May.

High School Capacity—This past Friday, purchasing issued a RFP for high school facilities planning study. The analysis will review current and projected enrollment and space needs at Albemarle, Western Albemarle and Monticello high schools. Among the considerations are the impact that the new state graduation requirements will have on future needs since the new requirements will increase the amount of time that students spend out of school in internships and other community-based learning experiences. All facility space options are on the table, from building a new school to additions to existing buildings to reconfigurations. During the next several months, the consultant will meet with educators and members of the community before presenting their recommendations to the School Board in the fall.

World Language Initiative—The division's ESOL office has begun a series of meetings with school principals and parents on how best to align the language immersion program at Cale Elementary School with language programs at Burley and Walton Middle Schools. Immersion programs have up to 50 percent of instruction in English and 50 percent in a world language, Spanish in Cale's case. Immersion programs do not exist in middle schools, so students moving from Cale to Burley or Walton often are at a higher proficiency level than students who are not from Cale. Three elementary schools, Cale, Woodbrook and Meriwether Lewis currently have world language programs although Cale's is the only immersion program. The Board's goal is to continue to expand the number of elementary schools offering world language programs and to improve the transition to middle and high school programs. Any changes to the curriculum are expected to take place in the 2018-19 school year.

Walton Honors—A team of Walton Middle School students took first place in a state competition to design a school of the future. Sponsored by the Virginia Board of the Association for Learning Environments, the School Next Virginia competition asked students to imagine how their school could be modernized. The Walton students offered a concept developed around the theme of wellness, including a fitness room, dance studio, nutrition lab, garden and a biophilic design. Students are moving on to regional competition next week in South Carolina.

Albemarle HS Championships—Several programs and student at Albemarle High School earned state and national honors this month. The jazz band took first place in the highly prestigious Chantilly Jazz Festival and Elise Underwood was recognized as the top instrumentalist. The school's forensic team won their state championship with three students earning first place in their category. The team moves on to the regional competition in Louisville, Kentucky. Finally, Allison Humphrey's poetry entry received recognition among some 330,000 entries in the Scholastic Art & Writing competition, qualifying her to go to Carnegie Hall in New York in June.

ACPS in National Program—The division has been selected to serve as one of 10 regional hubs across the country as part of a new initiative funded by Google. With support from MakerEd and the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, hubs will use their expertise in expanding maker education and project-based learning in schools in their regional area. Eventually, the plan is for hubs to develop closer working relationships with museums, community centers and other outside-the-classroom organizations. We already are working with the Scottsville Fire Department on a maker program for this summer in their new community facility.

State Nutrition Award—Cynthia Tichner, who manages the school cafeteria at Meriwether Lewis, has been selected as the Manager of the Year for Virginia by the State Nutrition Association. She now will compete for the regional title. Among her menu specialties are Sweet Potato and Kale Smoothies.

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