



Board-to-Board

January, 2018

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

Funding Request--The Superintendent delivered her funding request to the School Board on January 18. It projects a 4.2 percent increase in expenditures or \$7.6 million and an expected increase in revenues of 3.5 percent or \$6.3 million. The currently anticipated \$1.26 million funding gap is one of the smallest in recent years at this stage of the budget development process and is the result of anticipated declines in both federal and state revenues. To offset a portion of declining state revenues, the Governor has proposed a one-time offset of \$1.9 million to the school division resulting from the adverse impact of the recalculated composite index that will reduce state revenues to Albemarle by more than \$6 million over the next two years.

The increase in the funding request is less than one percent once inflation and student enrollment growth is taken into account. The principle objective in this year's needs-based budget is *Equity & Opportunity*, building on the *Equity & Access* goal of the current budget. In addition to \$4.1 million in compensation, other significant initiatives are removing class fees for students, adding diversity teaching resources, providing transportation for students to attend STEM academies outside their normal attendance zone, a pilot student technology center to expand internships and increasing mental health services and support for students.

The School Board held its public hearing on the funding request on January 30 and at its February 8 meeting, is scheduled to vote on the request it will send to the Board of Supervisors.

Redistricting Approved—Following our public hearing on January 11, the Board approved the redistricting of 216 students among urban ring schools. The approval followed the recommendations of both the citizens advisory committee and Superintendent Moran. Under the redistricting plan, beginning in August, 113 current Greer students would be relocated to Woodbrook and another 31 students to Agnor-Hurt; 72 Agnor-Hurt students would move to Woodbrook and 26 middle school students would be transferred from Burley to Jouett. Greer and Agnor-Hurt would fall well below capacity and the newly-expanded Woodbrook would become the largest elementary school in the urban ring.

To mitigate the impact of redistricting, the School Board voted to offer rising fifth, sixth and seventh graders and their siblings the option to remain in their current school for one year or until they complete their middle school education.

Organizational Meeting—At the January 11 meeting, Dr. Kate Acuff was re-elected to a third term as board chair and Jonno Alcaro was re-elected as vice chair. Among committee assignments, Mr. Alcaro, Steve Koleszar and Dave Oberg will serve on the CATEC Board; Ms. Acuff and Mr. Alcaro on the Capital Improvement Oversight Committee and Katrina Callsen on the Audit Committee and on the Board of the Piedmont Educational Regional Program. Graham Paige is our representative on the Public Education Foundation and Jason Buyaki is serving on the Discipline Committee.

Long-Range Planning Committee—Four appointments were made at the January 25 School Board meeting to the Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee. Steve Janes was appointed to represent the Rivanna District; Bruce Dotson as the Rio representative; Gail Lovette as the at-large representative and Tammie Moses for the Jack Jouett District.

School Bus Safety—Plans to implement the stop arm camera program for school buses suffered a setback when a state senate committee again voted against allowing third party access to vehicle owner information. This additional legislation is needed to process violations captured on camera of motorists who pass a stopped school bus similarly to the procedure for red light traffic programs. As an alternative, separate legislation in the General Assembly would have directed the Department of Education to mandate the use of extended stop arms as another preventive measure but the legislation was delayed for a year. Albemarle County is one of three in the state that is conducting a pilot program on the effectiveness of extended stop arms. Early results show they do have a deterrent effect, cutting half the incidences of motorists passing stopped school buses. It is estimated here are at least 6,000 such violations per year that put our students at risk.

State Academic Waiver—Deputy Superintendent Dr. Matthew Haas met with the state Board of Education on January 18 and obtained approval to pilot a change in the advanced placement course curriculum that could begin in the 2019-20 school year. Albemarle County would become the first school division in the state to eliminate the additional weighting given to Advanced Placement courses in computing GPA. Currently, some students have as many as seven AP classes on their schedule. The extra weighting often prevents students from taking unweighted classes in which they have an interest for fear that it would lower their GPA. Our research involving students and families, and the work done by our School Health Advisory Committee, also indicate that taking so many AP classes significantly increases the time demands and stress on students, crowding out their opportunity to pursue other extracurricular or community interests. College admission officials in the state and elsewhere have told us such a change would not adversely affect a student's acceptance status.

After School Child Care Improvements—Program officials from our Extended Day Enrichment Program (EDEP) are testifying in Richmond this week in favor of a bill that would reduce costs for the county's program. The changes would increase opportunities to keep tuition at affordable levels and consider subsidy options that would assist children from economically disadvantaged homes. The need for the bill results from the state's transitioning of the program's oversight from the department of education to the department of social services a few years ago. As a result of this transition, school divisions became subject to increased program regulations that will adversely impact costs for this self-sustaining program. The proposed bill would permit local school boards to set safety and supervisory standards for these school-based and staffed programs.

National Honor for Local Teacher—Scott Williams, who teaches physical education at Meriwether Lewis Elementary School and has earned state recognition for his innovative health, wellness and nutritional programs, is one of 12 national winners of the Action for Healthy Kids Heroes Award. The mission of the organization, based in Chicago, is to make every kid healthy, active and ready to learn.

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