Board-to-Board

March, 2018

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

State Revenue Update—The General Assembly concluded their session this year without adopting a budget. Gov. Northam subsequently submitted the same budget that Gov. McAuliffe had proposed in December, which includes no loss funding to 34 school divisions across the Commonwealth. As the state has done in the past for school divisions that face a significant decline in state revenues, no loss is intended to offset some of that reduction. Albemarle would receive $1.9 million over two years. Both houses of the General Assembly had taken no loss out of the budget in their deliberations. The Governor in effect has put it back in. There is a special session of the General Assembly on April 11 to reconsider the governor's budget and we are communicating the importance of retaining no loss to our local legislators. Among the points—several programs in next year's budget support the state's *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* directive from the state legislature and could be at risk from the funding gap created by the $3 million cut in state revenues that are projected for next year.

Student Walkout— Close to 1,800 of our approximately 7,000 middle and high school students participated in the March 14 walkout. By all reports, students were respectful and orderly during the 17 minutes that students spent outside school buildings.   At the conclusion of that time, all students quietly returned to class. The next scheduled walkout is April 20, also at 10 a.m. and according to the national publicity around this event, students are being encouraged to not return to class but to leave for the day. If students do leave, they will be marked absent for the day and it will be treated as an excused absence if parents make that request prior to the event.

Science Fair—At the 37th annual Piedmont Regional Science Fair, held this month at John Paul Jones Arena, Albemarle County students earned 14 of the 15 first place awards. Jee-Ho Kim, a junior at Albemarle High School, was one of two "Best in Show" winners for his project, "Examining Manufactured Esterification, Homemade Esterfication and Non-Corroding Coating as Viable Solutions to Fatberg Formation." One of the uses of esters is as a solvent and the project looked at various techniques for dissolving large clogs in sewer line. Juniors Mriganka Mandal and Sophie Meyer were runners-up for their study, "MRI-Based Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Risk Assessment Aid Using Machine Learning," which looked at how to combat thickening of the heart muscle.

Community Use, Extended Day Enrichment Updates—At our March 8 meeting, we reviewed reports on two changes in programs. We piloted a significantly reduced-rate tuition for our sfter-school Extended Day Enrichment Program for elementary school students attending Red Hill and Scottsville. The reduced rates had no impact on participation. Given that we believe there is a need for greater equity and demand throughout the county for this program and the relatively small student populations at the two schools, we are looking at testing the impact of reduced tuition rates at more populated schools in the future. We also learned that the recent fee increases we instituted one year ago for community use of school facilities, such as our turf athletic fields, has substantially boosted our maintenance funding for these facilities without reducing use. This eliminates the need to subsidize maintenance expenses from general funds.

One-Time Funding—Also at our March 8 meeting, we voted to allocate $1.39 million in savings from our health insurance program to several one-time needs in instruction, facilities, technology and transportation. The single largest expenditure is $300,000 to install shades on all interior and exterior classroom windows. This work will be completed this calendar year and is one of two additions to our continuous school safety improvement program that were approved at the meeting. Also going forward are $100,000 in enhancements of our visitor management system at all schools. This is the system by which all visitors must first enter a school's main office, present identification, be screened against the state's sexual offender registry, have the purpose of their visit confirmed and then receive a badge before being permitted to enter the school from the main office.

Next Generation Virtual Reality—Burley is one of a select group of schools throughout the country selected by Google to beta test the next generation of its virtual reality technology. Called Augmented Reality, headsets are replaced by individual units held by students that substantially enhance the learning experience. Students, for example, can experience what it is like to be inside a human eyeball. Google explains that the individual units allows students to walk around the room and discuss and collaborate their findings with peers, "which more closely reflects what is happening in workplaces today."

Destination Imagination—Nine student teams from five different schools qualified at the state tournament for the Global Finals in May. Albemarle High School will send three teams, Brownsville and Henley will send two apiece and Sutherland and Walton will send one team each. This is the second year in a row that the division will be sending nine teams. More than 1,000 of the top teams from 45 states and 14 countries participate in the Global Finals, which in addition to the competition, incudes interactive exhibits, pin trading among students and skills workshops.

Statewide Award—Superintendent Moran received the 2018 Outstanding Service to Education Award this month from the Women Education Leaders in Virginia, a non-profit organization affiliated with UVA's Graduate School of Education. Among the criteria for the award is "wide-ranging influence, effective leadership, deep impact on education and service to the profession beyond normal job responsibilities." Previous recipients include Dr. Pat Wright, the former State Superintendent of Public Education.

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