



Board-to-Board, December, 2018

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

Albemarle County School Board Member Holds Town Hall—On December 5, Steve Koleszar, School Board representative from the Scottsville Magisterial District, held a town hall at Cale Elementary School in order to give members of the Albemarle County Public Schools community the opportunity to voice their thoughts in a more informal setting. Those in attendance at the gathering discussed such topics as school facilities, meals and bus transportation. The Albemarle County School Board is scheduled for its next business meeting on January 10.

Anti-Racism Policy Updates—On December 13, the Albemarle County School Board drew closer to approving a new anti-racism policy at its work session. At the direction of the Board, ACPS staff began developing this policy in July, and eight students from county high schools have been drafting the policy over several months in collaboration with the ACPS Office of Community Engagement and Kimalee Dickerson, an attorney and doctoral student at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education. During the work session, members of the School Board and Superintendent Matt Haas weighed in on the newest version of the policy, which would require training for administrators, teachers and counselors on the relationship between tracking and racial disparities in student outcomes, and the role of implicit bias in class assignments. It also would require middle and high schools to offer supplementary coursework for students interested in moving into higher-level classes. As part of the research in the development of the Anti-Racism Policy, it was found that few school divisions have such a well thought-out and comprehensive policy. The School Board will make some modifications to the policy, but it hopes to adopt the final version at a meeting sometime early next year. As one of the student leaders who worked on this policy noted, "we are not interested in weed-whacking (racism); we want to pull it out by the roots." In this sentiment, the School Board agrees.

Community Public Charter School Teams with MIT as Assessment Pilot—Community Public Charter School has been working with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the nonprofit organization Maker Ed to develop a new and effective system for assessing student capacity and capability. Last winter, MIT approached CPCS about being a part of their "playful assessment" research. "Playful assessment" aims to capture growth in skills considered high priority, such as reasoning, creativity, and collaboration. This kind of assessment is meant to be less disruptive to learning by being embedded in learning experiences, and much of it hinges on self-reflection and peer evaluation in addition to rigorous evidence collection. CPCS is charged with identifying and piloting teaching and learning methods that other schools in Albemarle should adopt, but MIT's involvement in its work means that CPCS is also acting as a test site for

schools throughout the nation. MIT is also running a similar pilot at a San Mateo, California public school.

Governor's Proposed Budget to Feature Raises for Teachers, Funding for Safer Learning Environments—In December, Governor Ralph Northam announced that his proposed 2019 budget will feature a 2 percent raise in teacher salaries on top of the 3 percent raise adopted by the General Assembly in the budget signed earlier this year. The budget also designates \$39 million for investments that ensure safer learning environments for Virginia's K-12 students, including an allocation of \$36 million in funding for additional school counselors across Virginia. This focus on school safety is a response to the high rate of suicide among school-aged youth in the United States and in the Commonwealth and should put the state on the path to reducing the ratio of counselor to student from 1 to 425 to 1 to 250 in a few years. The additional \$3.3 million will go to the Virginia Center for School Campus Safety, which will enable it to fund critical positions, expand training, offer support for the annual school climate survey, and provide active shooter trainings. \$80 million will go to the Commonwealth's Literary Fund for school construction loans.