



Board-to-Board, September 2020

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

Surveys Sent to Employees, Families and Students Regarding School Reopening—At the October 8 meeting of the Albemarle County School Board, Board members will be considering Superintendent Dr. Matt Haas’s recommendation for how instruction will be delivered to Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) students beginning on November 8, the second marking period of the school year. The division is currently in Stage 2 of its reopening plan, which limits students and staff in ACPS buildings.

Among the options for the next marking period is a move to Stage 3, which would expand the number of students and staff in schools to moderate levels. If a move to Stage 3 is approved on October 8, parents would still have the option of keeping their children in all-virtual instruction.

An important part of Dr. Haas’s decision-making process for his recommendation and for the School Board’s consideration will be the feedback given by employees, parents and students via online surveys. Those surveys, sent out during the last week of September, were accompanied by a presentation that provided specific details on what Stage 3 would look like as well as current health and safety data and the various options available if Stage 3 is approved by the Board on October 8.

Survey data will be available after their October 2 deadline.

ACPS High School Graduates Score Higher Than State and National Peers on College Board’s 2020 College Readiness Standard—High school seniors in ACPS continued in 2020 to post higher college readiness scores than their peers in Virginia and across the nation, according to recently released data from the College Board. Students from Albemarle, Monticello, Murray, and Western Albemarle high schools earned a combined mean test score of 1190 on the College Board’s reading/writing and math SAT, 80 points higher than the score for all seniors in Virginia and 139 points ahead of national scores.

The combined test scores are used by the College Board to produce a college readiness benchmark. Research has shown that students who meet or exceed the benchmark have a high likelihood for success in credit-bearing college work.

Three out of four ACPS seniors (74 percent) met the benchmark this year. In Virginia, slightly over half of all students (55 percent) did the same, but less than half of the seniors (45 percent) across the nation did so.

The mean test score on the evidence-based reading and writing section for the division's seniors was 603, which was 39 points higher than the score for all seniors in Virginia and 75 points ahead of national scores. On the math section, the local mean score was 588, exceeding the statewide score by 42 points and the nationwide score by 65 points.

One improvement area that will continue to be the focus of all schools this year is the fuller implementation of strategies and programs, such as culturally responsive teaching, that have proven effective in reducing the achievement gap between white and minority students.

SAT results related to that question were mixed. Hispanic students in the division scored well above the mean test scores for Hispanic students in Virginia and across the nation, with a combined score of 1166. Across the state, the combined score for Hispanic students was 1059, and nationally, it was 969. Among black students, however, the mean score in the division was 916, nearly 50 points below the state mean score for black students and slightly below the national mean score of 927.

Learning Resource for Secondary School ELA Intervention Available for Public Review—Reading Plus, a learning resource for secondary school English language arts (ELA) intervention, was proposed for adoption at the Albemarle County School Board meeting on September 10, 2020. An [overview of Reading Plus](#) is available online in PDF format.

Community members may request to review the Reading Plus resource and provide feedback by emailing Lisa Molinaro, the school division's Lead Coach for Response to Intervention, at lisamo@k12albemarle.org. The resource will be open to public review at the County Office Building at 401 McIntire Road in Charlottesville. Review materials are located in the Department of Instruction on the 3rd floor.

Following the requisite 30-day public review, staff will consider any feedback received and make appropriate recommendations for action and/or adoption at the School Board meeting on October 22, 2020.

In accordance with [School Board Policy IIAA, Learning Resources/Textbook Selection and Adoption](#), the criteria for learning resources and textbook selection include educational suitability and age appropriateness; timeliness; product quality; readability; authoritativeness and reputation of the publisher, author, etc.; supplemental sources indicated; favorable reviews and recommendations; potential user appeal; and overall value.

Baker-Butler Receives National Award for Success in Closing Student Achievement Gaps With Strong Gains in Key Student Groups—For the first time in Virginia, a school has been named a National Blue Ribbon School for closing achievement gaps between their overall student population and English Learners, special education students, and students from economically disadvantaged homes.

A leading priority for schools across the country, closing achievement gaps between students of all demographic and economic backgrounds and the general student population has been a

continuing challenge for decades. The U.S. Department of Education's National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes schools that have shown significant progress in closing these gaps.

According to the Virginia Department of Education, of 1,833 schools in the state, 58, or three percent, met the criteria for the Blue Ribbon Program's Exemplary Award for Closing Achievement Gaps. The U.S. Department of Education announced this week that Baker-Butler is one of four schools in the state to receive the award this year.

Baker-Butler's selection was based upon Standards of Learning (SOL) test scores in reading and math over a three-year period beginning with the 2016-17 school year. Pass rates for every student membership group increased each year on the reading and math SOL exams, and overall, these rates reached 91 percent in reading and 94 percent in math. These gains included increases between 25 and 30 percent for English L learners, special education students, and students from economically disadvantaged homes, designated as Gap Group 1 by the state and federal departments of education.

As a result of these gains, achievement gaps between student membership groups decreased every year. For example, the gap in math between students with disabilities and the school average declined from 34 to 12 percentage points, and the gap in reading between Hispanic students and the overall school average was eliminated. Over the past five years at Baker-Butler, the achievement gap between Black students and White students decreased from 40 to 13 percentage points in reading and from 38 to six percentage points in math.

Overall, during the three-year award period, the pass rate for Gap Group 1 students on the reading SOL increased to 80 percent. For these students, pass rates on the math SOL improved to 88 percent. During this same time frame, overall pass rates for all students in the school on the reading SOL rose by 11 percent and by 15 percent on the math SOL. During this same time, the number of students in Gap Group 1 grew from 183 to 243.