



Board-to-Board, December 2020

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

Equity Specialist Team Receives Virginia's Top Education Equity Award for Success in Division Schools—Albemarle County Public Schools' (ACPS) team of equity specialists received the Virginia Department of Education's Mary Peake Award for Excellence in Education Equity. Among the equity team's achievements has been the development of the division's unique evidence-based Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) model and the creation of a Diversity Resource Teachers program. As part of CRT, educators can be certified or earn a micro-credential in the program.

The CRT program supports all students by using teaching strategies and practices that incorporate their cultural values and knowledge into the learning approach for each student. Each school has a diversity resource teacher who delivers professional development on a monthly basis. Equity specialists also deliver professional development and training to all educators, using, for example, school-based book studies of such research, like *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* and *Courageous Conversations About Race*.

School Board Holds Annual Legislative Meeting—On December 17, the Albemarle County School Board held its annual legislative meeting with local legislators to discuss its priorities for the 2021 General Assembly Session. Delegates Rob Bell, Sally Hudson and Chris Runion and Senator Creigh Deeds were all present at the virtual meeting.

This year, the ACPS legislative packet includes items related to four themes: state funding, mental health, social justice and anti-racism and teacher recruitment and retention. Specifically, the board is asking legislators to prioritize increased state funding for statewide mandates around things like mental health staffing in schools. It also asks legislators to look into alternative discipline programs for students that might increase equity in the Commonwealth. It requests that legislators support reallocating the four percent raise that teachers were promised at the 2020 General Assembly session. It also urges legislators to contribute more state funding to facilitate virtual learning during the pandemic and to adjust the way the state calculates funding for schools based on average daily membership (ADM).

Murray Elementary School Community Advisory Committee Appointed; Organizational Meeting Scheduled for Tuesday—The first meeting of the Murray Community Advisory Committee was held virtually on Tuesday, November 24. A total of 16 school and community members have been selected to serve on the committee, which will review the name of the school consistent with a School Board directive and the school division's facility naming policy.

V.L. Murray Elementary School is the fourth school in the division to have its name reviewed following the School Board's 2018 decision to have Superintendent Dr. Matthew Haas evaluate all schools named for individuals. Of the division's 25 schools, 14 are named for individuals.

Members of the community and the committee can recommend either a new name be chosen for the school or the retention of its current name. If the advisory committee selects the current school name as one of its three finalists, the policy requires the committee to examine if Virginia Lee Murray made contributions to the community of state, national, or world-wide significance. It also requires committee members to determine if her personal and professional conduct exemplifies the School Board's current values of excellence, young people, community, and respect.

Members of the advisory committee were chosen from among those who expressed interest in serving on the committee. Two committee members are the school's principal, Alison Dwier-Selden, and the division's lead coach for social studies, John Hobson. Teller Stalfort, the parent of a Murray student, will serve as the committee's chair.

Three members are from the Murray faculty: Hollins Mills, Laura Richardson, and Shannon Mueller. Five are parents of Murray students: Miles Davis, Robert Brandt, Anita McGinty, Tolu Odumosu, and Kate Shooter. Two live in the school community, but do not have students attending Murray: Leslie Ratan and Linda Perriello. There are also four Murray alumni on the committee: Lorenzo Dickerson, Roosevelt Barbour, Davina Jackson, and Cindy Shepherd. Barbour was among the first class of students when the school opened in 1960.

Updates regarding the [Murray Elementary School Naming Review](#) are accessible on the school division's [School Naming Review](#) website, along with current information on all school naming reviews. Community members with questions or suggestions about the Murray naming review can email the advisory committee at SchoolNamingReview@k12albemarle.org.

Virginia L. Murray was born in Albemarle County in 1897. She received her elementary education in Albemarle County, but graduated from high school in Gloucester High School in Capahosic, Virginia. In 1927, she graduated from Howard University, and in 1953, at the age of 56, she received her master's degree from New York University. In 1928, Ms. Murray began her teaching career in a one-room schoolhouse in Cobham, Virginia, under the direction of Maggie Burley. She served as demonstration teacher until 1931 when she was appointed Jeannes Supervisor of Elementary Education. She was the first black supervisor ever appointed in Albemarle County.

The committee's recommendation on a school name will be provided to the superintendent, who, in turn, will make a recommendation to the School Board.

State of the Division 2020—Through the annual State of the Division report, the school division provides information to the School Board and the community about our successes and challenges from the previous school year. The report serves as an accountability tool, whereby ACPS seeks to track our progress toward meeting our goals and to identify and improve our weaknesses. The report also informs our decision-making, whether we are evaluating an instructional method, shaping a systemic practice, or considering budget priorities.

Each year, ACPS shares the State of the Division report as another opportunity to engage our stakeholders, including our students and their families, our employees, and our community members. We consider stakeholder feedback to be an essential part of the continuous improvement process, and we encourage community members to contribute to our ongoing efforts to learn, adapt and grow through participation in school board meetings, community meetings, and online surveys.

Please refer to the [State of the Division web page](#) to review the [State of the Division 2020 report](#).

Anti-Racism Policy Evaluation Report—On February 28, 2019, the Albemarle County School Board approved [Policy ACC, Anti-Racism](#), which details the school division’s pledge to establish and sustain an equitable community, end the predictive value of race, and ensure the success of each individual student and employee. As a school division that rejects all forms of racism, we are committed to meeting the regulations set forth by the Anti-Racism policy, which require action in the areas of policy communication; leadership and administration; curriculum and instruction; training; and policy enforcement. The Anti-Racism Policy Evaluation Report serves to update our School Board and the broader community on the school division’s progress toward achieving expectations in each of these areas.

The first annual [Anti-Racism Policy Evaluation Report](#) is available to review on our [Anti-Racism Policy web page](#).

Charter School’s Community Advisory Committee Recommends 10 Possible School Names for Public Survey Next Month—The community advisory committee that will be recommending a name for the school division’s charter school has developed a list of 10 possibilities that will be the subject of a community-wide online survey next month.

The naming process began last spring following the School Board’s approval in February of the merger of the division’s two charter schools—the Community Public Charter School, a middle school, and Murray High School. The process to select a name for the new school began in May when school community volunteers serving on the naming advisory committee held their first meeting.

Two developments led to a pause in the committee’s work—the pandemic, which shifted all meetings online, and a reconsideration of the committee’s initial suggestion, which was Rose Hill Community School. That decision followed reports that Rose Hill once was the name of a plantation.

In July, the advisory committee said reconsidering its suggestion was the best course of action in lieu of those reports. Stephanie Passman, the school's lead teacher and the advisory committee chair, recently said that reviewing the local community's history and values has been an important part of the curriculum for students this fall.

Those 10 names include Albemarle Collaborator School; Community School for Creativity; Community School of Albemarle; Community School of Innovation; Dogwood Community School; Hillside Community School; Lab School of Albemarle; Murray Community School; Rivanna Community School; and Rolling Hills Community School.

These suggestions will be the subject of an online community survey next month to determine those with the most support. The committee will use this data to select three names as finalists, which in turn will be the subject of a public meeting in February during which participants will be invited to offer their views on the three names.

The community advisory committee includes parents of students in the school, school staff, students, parents from feeder schools, and members of the community who do not have children enrolled in the school. Information on the committee's meetings and resources can be found on our [School Naming Review: Murray High School](#) web page.

Questions or comments about the naming process for the charter school can be emailed to SchoolNamingReview@k12albemarle.org. Information about the School Board's policy on the naming or renaming of schools and the status of all reviews can be accessed on the division's [School Naming Review](#) site.