



Board-to-Board, March 2021

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

ACPS Holds Division-Wide Anti-Racism Professional Development—On March 26, Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) held a division-wide professional development session with Glenn Singleton, author of *Courageous Conversations About Race*, via Zoom. This served as an exciting and unique opportunity for the division to gather together and hear a common message intended to help us advance its equity mission.

Singleton's work has been a driver for the division's most important professional learning and personal reflection around anti-racism. This common experience will provide the foundation for future and deeper work together. Over 80% of ACPS employees attended the event.

Virginia L. Murray Community Advisory Committee Finds School's Current Name Reflects School Division Values, Recommends No Change in the School's Name—The Virginia L. Murray Elementary School community advisory committee has recommended that the school retain its current name. The committee, which began its naming review this past November, conducted two community-wide online surveys and held two public meetings before making its recommendation this week to the school division's Superintendent, Dr. Matthew Haas.

The committee's report carries out a division-wide School Board policy directing Haas to appoint community advisory committees to review the names of all schools in the division that are named for individuals. The purpose is to ensure that the life's work of the namesake reflects the division's four values of excellence, young people, community, and respect.

The advisory committee noted that Virginia L. Murray was born in Albemarle County in 1897 and throughout her life, was a role model for tenacity and perseverance at a time when Black women faced many institutional barriers. In 1931, she was appointed Jeannes Supervisor of Elementary Education, becoming the first Black supervisor appointed in Albemarle County.

Ms. Murray died in 1959, one year before Murray Elementary School opened. In recommending that the school be named for her, co-workers at the time described her faithfulness, unselfishness, and devotion to duty.

More than 800 responses were received from the two online surveys and that nine out of 10 of those responses supported the school retaining its current name.

As called for in the School Board's naming review policy, Haas will take the committee's recommendation under advisement and make his recommendation to the School Board next week, during their meeting on Thursday, April 1. The Board is expected to make the final decision on the school's name at their meeting on April 22.

There are 13 schools in the division that are named for individuals, and Murray Elementary School is the fourth school to have completed a naming review. Information on the naming review policy, process, and all of the completed reviews can be found on the division's [School Naming Review](#) website. Information specific to the Murray Elementary School naming review is posted on the [School Naming Review: Murray Elementary School](#) page.

Seventh Annual WinterSongs Concert Held Virtually, Raised Funds to Support Victims of Domestic Violence—The seventh annual *WinterSongs* concert, which supports the Shelter for Help in Emergency, was held virtually for the first time on Saturday, March 27. The event was livestreamed on YouTube.

The benefit concert brought together women's choruses from five schools in Central Virginia, including the University of Virginia, for a stirring program that culminates with all vocalists on stage for the finale. Since its debut in 2015, *WinterSongs* has raised \$25,000 to assist women in crisis in Albemarle and Charlottesville.

Women's choruses from Albemarle, Charlottesville, and Orange County high schools joined the Burley Bearettes. The University of Virginia Women's Chorus, under the direction of KaeRenae Mitchell, also joined the singers.

There was no admission charge for the concert, but tax-deductible donations to the Shelter for Help in Emergency are encouraged. Last year, the Shelter noted that the *WinterSongs* concert provided the equivalent of more than two months of shelter and safety for women in need.

Earlier on Saturday, the Shelter conducted a series of virtual workshops for the participating vocalists on the theme of "Women as Leaders" in art, civic duty, medicine, science, and many other fields. Guest speakers included [Marin Alsop](#), conductor of the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra; award winning NYC vocalist [Julie Reyburn](#); Pulitzer Prize winning composer [Caroline Shaw](#); author [Anne Marie Pace](#); science educator and professional streaming media specialist [Ceri Riley](#); and Ontario midwife Nicole Roach. [Side by Side](#) of Richmond also presented two sessions.

For the program finale, Jennings collaborated with the Shelter for Help in Emergency to include a multi-school rendition of Eric Whitacre's "The Seal Lullaby."