

October 28, 2010 Economic Work Session Overview/Coversheet

Coupled with national and international research in the attached report and other work session resources, the Board's continuing work to strategically align its Goal actions with those of the community, education, business and government partners will provide direction for defining and attaining Vision 2023 outcomes. At the June 2010 Retreat, the Board's focus on college and workforce readiness skills and their congruence with Albemarle County Public Schools' Lifelong Learning Standards led to discussion about the limitations of high stake tests that only narrowly assess the knowledge and skills needed for graduates to be career, college, and citizenship ready when they transition from Albemarle's high schools into adulthood. The Board affirmed its commitment to the Framework for Quality Learning as a blueprint for curricular, assessment, and instructional direction. In addition, the Board identified continued work to integrate technology learning tools and applications as critical to contemporary learning work that prepares students to enter college and the workforce. The Board discussed that post-secondary education now is considered to be baseline for almost all graduates to enter a contemporary workforce with increased technical and analytical skill demands, regardless of the sector or position.

This work session creates a forum for dialogue with local business and economic development leaders about shifting workforce and economic demands in the Albemarle community. The role K-12 public education plays in preparing Albemarle County students and the community to be competitive in a global economy directly links through economic development planning to the business and higher education community. The work session will begin with a brief presentation by Mike Harvey, executive director of the Thomas Jefferson Partnership for Economic Development, and by Division staff. Following the introductory presentation, the Board will participate in a roundtable discussion with business community representatives, an opportunity for "town hall" questions, and a Board debrief.

The School Board and staff recognize the importance of educating the young people who are enrolled in its Pk-12 program to the highest level possible to increase choices of and access to 21st century career pathways that young people desire to pursue. To that end, the Board's commitment to its Vision, Mission, Goals, and Core Values provides strategic Policy direction to staff in 16 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, 4 high schools and the Charlottesville-Albemarle Technical Education Center. In the strategic goals, the Board has defined Goals to:

- 1: Prepare all students to succeed as members of a global community and in a global economy.
- 2: Eliminate the Achievement Gap*.
- 3: Recruit, retain and develop a diverse cadre of the highest quality teaching personnel, staff, and administrators.
- 4: Achieve recognition as a world-class educational system.
- 5: Establish efficient systems for development, allocation, and alignment of resources to support the Division's vision, mission, and goals.

The Board of Supervisors also has endorsed the importance of a top-quality school division to the economic vitality and quality of life of the community through its strategic priority that:

"By June 30, 2009, the Board of Supervisors and general government employees will increase collaborative efforts with the School Board and with employees of the schools system to assist the School Division to achieve recognition as a "world class education system."

The Board of Supervisors also recognizes the importance of education through a direct statement in its Preamble to Economic Development Action Plan:

"Albemarle County's commitment to a quality community involves creating an attractive, sustainable, safe, and vibrant place to live, work and raise a family. Our commitments to education and infrastructure are critical components of Albemarle's quality of life, and, by default, its business growth. Education in our community is a successful partnership, with our public school division recognized as one of the highest performing in the Commonwealth and the University of Virginia and Piedmont Virginia Community College highly acclaimed as well respected institutions of higher learning. Programs including the County "bright stars" pre-kindergarten program and the Math-Engineering-Science Academy (MESA) magnet school along with CATEC are examples of how our range of educational opportunities, technology-rich classrooms, and top-quality instruction, as well as collaboration with key public and private sector partners, help ensure a highly educated, capable local workforce ready to embrace the challenges of the global economy."

Educational quality also has been noted as a bipartisan agenda by the two most recent Presidential administrations as of the utmost importance to the economic future of the United States and the sustained competitiveness of its workforce in a globalized marketplace. This has also been clearly established by Virginia's former Governor Kaine and current Governor McDonnell. In establishing the Governor's Commission on Higher Education, Governor McDonnell states:

"The current period of economic challenge facing our Commonwealth and Nation comes during an era of rapid technological advancement and intensifying international competition, requiring an increasingly knowledgeable workforce and engaged citizenry. There is a well- documented general correlation between the degree or certificate a person gains and the income he or she earns-between a state's educational attainment and its per capita income. Higher education is among the state programs generating the highest return in terms of job creation, economic growth, and ultimately tax revenues."

National, state and local community agendas of governing bodies, business leaders, and the education sector all target strategic partnerships as a critical step towards building a high quality, sustainable workforce. A high quality system of public education services to the young people and adults who live, work, and learn in Albemarle County is essential to the economic vitality and quality of life of this community. This session provides the Board with an opportunity to hear from its stakeholders and partners as it continues strategic work to ensure all learners graduate on-time and ready for post-secondary education and a career.