

School Board Work Session: Aligning Albemarle: Vision 2023

Today's Kindergarten students will graduate Albemarle County Public Schools in 2023. To serve all students in our schools, leaders from the business community joined a discussion of the education and workforce credentials these students will need through their school career in order to help community/state/national business succeed. Special focus was given to the economic vitality the students will contribute to our community and our nation as ACPS graduates in 2023.

Several documents were provided to invitees for advance review. Included were a research brief authored by Assistant Director of Instruction Chad Ratliff, and the Albemarle County Economic Vitality Plan—which specifically lists ACPS in its preamble.

Mike Harvey, President of the Thomas Jefferson Partnership for Economic Development, provided a brief presentation of the shifting workforce and economic demands in the Albemarle community. Following Mr. Harvey's presentation, participants were asked to provide a brief introduction of their organization and the relationship Albemarle County public education plays in preparing students to serve their organization and our community. Following the introductions, participants joined with School Board members in a "Town Hall" discussion.

The following invitees were present:

- Achsah Carrier, UVa Weldon Cooper Center
- Mike Cromartie, State Farm, Claim Team Manager
- Rod Gentry, Union Bank & Trust
- Tim Hulbert, Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Barbara McMurry, CAAR
- Phil Roberts, DIA
- Rich Lilly, DIA
- Leonard Sandridge, UVa
- Susan Cabell Mains, Martha Jefferson Hospital
- Lee Catlin, Albemarle County
- Michelle Prosser, Energy Focus
- Duane Snow, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
- Rodney Thomas, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
- Ann Mallek, Chairman, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
- Tom Foley, Albemarle County Executive

The work session was a successful initial attempt to cultivate dialog and support from Albemarle's business/economic development community for ACPS. The clear message received from the participants was a desire to continue the discussion and identify opportunities to emphasize the significance of Albemarle's public education and its critical relationship with our community's economic vitality. Furthermore, an emphasis on the importance of "soft skills" in the workplace, and better marketing of ACPS programs, were recurrent themes throughout the discussion.