

Office of the Superintendent

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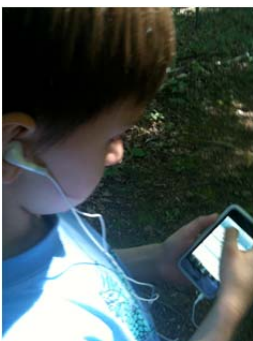
Each year, we enter the Division's annual Board retreat with a desire to accomplish all that is possible to meet the current and future needs of contemporary learners. Last year, the Board revised Goal-driven Priorities that led to new benchmarks to measure our ongoing progress against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The theme of Vision 2023 emerged as we imagined the educational changes that current kindergartners, the Class of 2023, will experience during their years in school.

Learning Implications for the Class of 2023

America's educators could not imagine seven years ago an educational tool as powerful as YouTube. Today, YouTube has become a virtual learning space for learners of all ages, from musicians to mathematicians. The [Khan Academy](https://www.khanacademy.org/) is only the tip of the iceberg representing how virtual learning will change education in coming years. Long before the Class of 2023 walks across the stage, it is likely *no* students will wait to take courses based solely on their age or grade. If learners need extra support, they will be able to extend the time needed to complete a course. The ultimate customization, the abolition of seat time in a classroom as a measure of course completion, is right around the corner for all learners and virtual learning is key.

During the recent medical school tour, we heard that printed textbooks were eliminated this year for first-year medical students. This is no longer an innovative idea in Pk-16+. Many school districts have already moved ahead to redirect funds away from print books to e-reader technologies. Some Albemarle teachers now use digital content almost exclusively in some classes. Many have begun to blend paper media with digital content. We know that textbooks are expensive and are increasingly becoming a tool as obsolete as a desktop computer. Mobile devices are the tools of choice among contemporary learners and their use will accelerate over the next three years in Pk-16+ as the Class of 2023 moves up through the grades.

The Future of Learning: Application, Analysis, Evaluation, and Creation



The future of learning is changing. Just as we heard from medical school faculty, business community representatives pointed out in recent Board work sessions that learners today need more than just content learning. They need to actively apply workforce skills in school through case studies, simulations, and project-based



learning. They need to become capable, independent learners while simultaneously building strong teamwork skills. The “flipped classroom” approach presses student teams to use the highest level of interdisciplinary critical and creative thought possible, every day. Relevant digital content must be culled by teachers and assigned as prerequisite work to interactive learning so that students no longer sit passively through lectures in front of a teaching wall. Training in how to assign work, teach, assess, and set up classrooms differently is a must for teachers expected to purposefully set up and facilitate learning high in engagement, interest, and rigor for students in this coming decade. These changes in student application of workforce skills, independent learning combined with teamwork skills, modified classrooms, and use of digital content must be addressed as we consider our strategic direction.

Agile Innovation

We acknowledged in a recent review of third quarter KPIs that each quarter’s information brings greater clarity to gaps in the alignment of the Division’s Vision, Mission, Goals, and Values with the actual work of departments and schools. The combination of ongoing process and progress monitoring has equipped staff with a toolkit to help identify current actions that need to be shaped, reinforced, or eliminated. PLC teams, principals, department heads, and central leaders are expected to make information-driven decisions using both formative data and observations. Engaging staff throughout the year in ongoing process assessment helps to increase quality of work at a point where we can make a difference in reaching outcomes, rather than figuring out what we might have done differently - after the year ends. Process and progress monitoring is a basic principle of quality management.

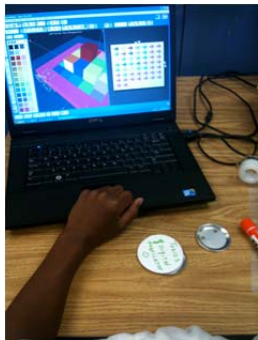
The Quality Council and Project Management Oversight Committee members now address ongoing quality performance improvement through use of the “Plan-Do-Study-Act” model. By monitoring ongoing processes, we are more likely to make fast shifts in practice that will benefit learners. For annual improvements within schools and departments and strategic changes that will impact learners in the Class of 2023, staff at all levels must work with greater agility to plan, implement, assess, review and make changes in response to new information.

To prepare contemporary learners, the Class of 2023, for life after graduation we need to make *more than* incremental changes through our strategic and school improvement planning processes. We have no time to wait and we need our educators, businesses, community members and the Board of Supervisors working with us to help take these next steps. This means making and supporting difficult decisions to free the necessary resources to support targeted changes. We live in a time where we have put innovations we thought would be implemented by now on a back burner to simmer. In some cases, we have had to turn the burner off.

Together, through our strategic work, we must clearly address the need to move with agility and accomplish the important, targeted changes needed to support contemporary learners over the next twenty-four months, not the four-five years we often take. We have built the foundation for some of these changes through our focus on the FQL, PLCs, and TPA. For others, we are far away from even forming the basis of a plan for implementation. These priority focus areas include:

- 1) Designing, building and implementing a system of fully virtual courses, hybrid courses, and blending virtual content into every secondary course.

- 2) Restructuring classrooms and media centers into learning spaces that support a combination of team and independent learning through the MIT TEAL-like model of “technology enhanced active learning.”
- 3) Immersing administrators and teachers in intensive and ongoing training and development with the purpose of achieving full engagement of all contemporary learners in high relevance, high interest, and high rigor work.
- 4) Establishing annual benchmark performance assessments with the purpose of determining whether students are acquiring the integrated knowledge and skills necessary to graduate with lifelong learning competencies needed for success, regardless of the career path they choose.



5) Developing and implementing a division plan for 1:1 “tool crib” access to expedite the use of digital content and virtual resources as needed for project-based learning. Intervention and acceleration opportunities and tools must be accessible to learners so that time becomes the variable in a competency-driven model with learning mastery as an expectation.

6) Auditing all instructional programs currently in place, Pk-12, to determine what areas we must strengthen to address anticipated needs of students to ensure their success in the workforce of the near future and what areas we should abandon to free up the necessary resources to accomplish our goals. A review of instructional programs includes but is not limited to pre-kindergarten, second and third language acquisition, STEM+ programming, communication technologies, virtual learning, and integration of design, invention and entrepreneurial strands across the curricula including the arts.

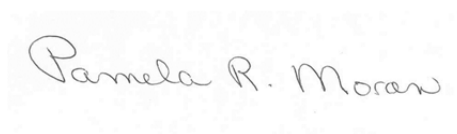
No Time to Waste

To this end, I ask you to consider these six recommendations as the foundation for a concerted, system-wide strategic effort to synchronize curricula, assessment, instruction, redesign of learning spaces supported by short- and long-term capital improvements, technology applications, professional development, and alignment with “near future” innovations in the workforce and colleges and universities. This system-wide effort would be accomplished by merging representatives from existing committees into a PK-12 Task Force charged by the Board and Superintendent to bring forward with immediacy specific recommendations and strategies to meet Board/Superintendent priorities identified for immediate work within the next twenty-four months.

Learners receive one chance each year to experience top quality teaching and access to the resources they need to learn. The quality of teaching is the most important factor inside schools that influences learning. At the same time, today’s technology provides differentiation opportunities that have never before been available to learners. We need educators who are committed to upgrading the skills they need to ensure that every learner, from the Class of 2011 to the Class of 2023, achieves the highest standards we set, those of lifelong learning competencies.

We have no time to waste in implementing the best quality of education possible to prepare our students to compete in tomorrow's workforce and contribute to the communities in which they will live. Neither China nor India yet educates 50% of their students beyond middle school, but they soon will. Neither Singapore nor Finland experiences the degree of poverty of Albemarle County, but they both provide services to ensure children enter school ready to learn. The economic vitality and quality of life in our own community depend on our efforts. Albemarle County may be just one cog in the educational wheel turning in Virginia and the nation, but we must, for the sake of national security and our democratic way of life do our part to deliver the highest level of educational attainment ever achieved by America's youth.

Thank you for consideration of my recommendations.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pamela R. Moran". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid.

Pamela R. Moran
Superintendent