



Board-to-Board, February 2019

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

School Board Presents 2019-20 Funding Request to Board of Supervisors; Final Budget to Be Adopted in April—On February 21, Albemarle County School Board Chair Jonno Alcaro and Vice-Chair Graham Paige presented a \$195.8 million funding request to the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors for the school year that will begin on July 1. Following a series of budget work sessions in February and March and an April 9 public hearing on a proposed tax rate and budget for the next fiscal year, the Board of Supervisors is expected to adopt a budget on April 16. The School Board will adopt its budget for the new school year later that month.

The funding request presented by the School Board would increase expenditures next year to \$195,757,442, or by 4.8 percent over the current year. Revenues are projected to increase by 4.6 percent to \$195,330,868. The difference between expenditures and revenues of \$426,574 is less than one-half of one percent of the overall funding request.

The Board's approval followed a series of work sessions on Superintendent Dr. Matthew Haas' funding request submitted to the Board on January 17. Significant changes since then include an additional \$1.6 million in forecasted local revenues; \$1.1 million set aside to address market imbalances in compensation for teachers and classified staff; \$76,000 to accelerate the provision of full-time school counselors in all elementary schools; and another \$15,000 for a pilot program to eliminate shortages in the division's substitute teachers pool.

Overall, 85 percent of the funding request, \$167.1 million, is for employee compensation and benefits. Only 11 percent of the funding request, \$21.8 million, is for operational expenses.

In his presentation to the School Board in January, Dr. Haas said his funding request "maps out the strategies and programs that will strengthen the interconnection between the fortunes of our schools and communities." One way to meet those demands, he noted, was to structure the school division's budget around the five priorities in the School Board's strategic plan. These include engaging every student; implementing balanced assessments that truly measure student growth and progress over time; improving student opportunities and achievements for all demographic groups; creating and expanding business and community partnerships that can yield up to 1,000 internships for high school students each year; and optimizing the efficient use of resources.

Complete information on the School Board's funding request is available on the school division's [2019-20 Budget Development](#) web page.

Albemarle County Graduates More Likely than State and National Peers to Have Earned College Credits for High School Classes in 2018—More than 40 percent of Albemarle County Public Schools graduates received Advanced Placement (AP) test scores in 2018 that positioned them to receive college credit for high school classes, according to data released by the College Board last week.

AP courses were established by the College Board to deliver college-level instruction to high school students. They are more rigorous than the high school curriculum and can enable high school students to earn college credits. AP courses are offered in six subject areas, including the Arts, English, History and Social Science, Math and Computer Science, the Sciences, and World Languages and Cultures. AP tests are scored on a scale of one to five, and students who earn a score of three or higher on the end-of-year tests often receive college credit for their work.

Among Albemarle County's 1,048 high school graduates, 43 percent earned a grade of three or higher on at least one AP test, 50 percent higher than the average in Virginia and 83 percent above the national average. According to the College Board, 28.5 percent of Virginia's high school graduates met this benchmark last year on at least one AP test, as did 23.5 percent of graduates across the nation. In fact, the 43 percent level reached by local graduates exceeded the statewide rate of 32.9 percent in Massachusetts, which had the highest statewide average in the nation.

In a news release last week, the Virginia Department of Education noted that, according to the College Board, the state's high school graduates earned more than 300,000 college credits a year ago. The Board estimated that this saved students and their families more than \$140 million in college tuition costs. The College Board also provides a college readiness score based on the combined SAT results and says that students who meet this measure have a 65 percent likelihood of achieving a grade point average of B or higher in their first year of college. Two out of three Albemarle County graduates met this benchmark, a percentage 13 points higher than the statewide average and 23 points better than the national average.

The College Board noted that, in addition to saving on future college tuition costs, students who take AP classes generally earn higher grade point averages in college, are more likely to graduate in four years, and have higher college graduation rates.

Anti-Racism Policy Update—At the February 14 School Board meeting, the board heard about updates to the draft Anti-Racism Policy, which has become stronger and more succinct since December. The stated purpose of the policy now reads, "Personal and institutional racism have historically existed and continues to exist in the Division. Combating racism in our schools is a legal and moral imperative." The policy also now calls for the development of a systemic equity needs assessment for the division, which would help identify processes and practices that cause or contribute to inequitable outcomes.

Future considerations for the policy before its completion include resources necessary to support its implementation and the development of a training that could be used throughout the school

division. The policy is still under consideration and will go before the Board again this spring before approval.

Albemarle County School Board Accepts RFP from Boys and Girls Club of Central Virginia—The Albemarle County School Board has directed ACPS staff to develop a Memorandum of Agreement with the Boys and Girls Club of Central Virginia to take back to the Board for consideration. This comes after a program evaluation on the Extended Day Enrichment Program, which highlighted the importance of high-quality after-school care as an educational imperative. One recommendation of the evaluation was to explore the possibility of partnering with external organizations to respond to the increasing demand for such after-school programs, fueled in part by the lack of affordable options for key segments of the school division’s population.

ACPS Spelling Champion Successfully Defends Her Title; Will Compete in Regional Bee for Fourth Consecutive Year—Henley seventh grader, Layla Boubier, successfully defended her title as the Spelling Bee Champion for Albemarle County Public Schools at the school division’s 14th annual Spelling Bee last evening. For the fourth consecutive year, Layla qualified to represent the county in the *Daily Progress* Regional Spelling Bee, which will take place on Saturday, March 9, beginning at 10 a.m. at Albemarle High School. That competition will feature the best spellers from public and private schools in the Central Virginia region. The winner of that competition will qualify for the National Bee. The Division Bee took 17 rounds, with Layla and Gray as the two finalists for the final five rounds. The winning word was “harangue,” which means angry speech, with origins from Medieval Latin and French.

Seven other students will join Layla on March 9, including last evening’s runner-up, Gray Tracey, a fifth grader who attends Murray Elementary School. Also moving on to the regional bee will be Trisha Hande from Sutherland; Ingrid Flaherty from Burley; Cale’s Paige Lane; Aayushmann Bhattacharyya from Hollymead; Jack Jouett’s Divya Hande; and Ashlyn Zarzyski from Broadus Wood.

In addition to qualifying for the National Bee as the regional champion next month, students can also earn their way to the finals via RSVBee, an online invitational program now in its second year. To be eligible, a student must attend a school enrolled in the Scripps National Spelling Bee program and have been a community or school champion.

The 2018 National Spelling Bee champion, Karthik Nemmani of McKinney, Texas, qualified for the National Bee through the RSVBee program. Information on the program is available at <http://spellingbee.com/rsvbee>.

The National Bee began in 1925. This year, 11 million students across the country will participate. The competition, which will be held in National Harbor, Maryland, begins on Monday, May 27, and will conclude on Thursday, May 30.

Fifth Annual WinterSongs Concert Raises Funds to Support Victims of Domestic Violence—The fifth annual WinterSongs concert, which raises money for the Shelter for Help in Emergency, was held on Saturday, February 23, at Monticello High School. The benefit concert

brought together women's choruses from 12 schools in Central Virginia for a stirring program that culminated with all vocalists on stage for the finale. Since its debut in 2015, *WinterSongs* has raised over \$18,000 to assist women in crisis in Charlottesville and Albemarle. Burley Middle School Choral Director Craig Jennings said that the idea was a response to violence against women in Charlottesville.

Several middle school women's choruses joined the *Burley Bearettes*, including Henley, Jouett, Sutherland and Walton. Area high schools were also at the concert, including Monticello High School's women's chorus, Albemarle High School's *No Fella A Cappella* and *Take Note!*, the *Knightengales* of Charlottesville High School, *Misique Voices* from Orange County High School, William Monroe High School's women's chorus, *Drop the Bass*, and the Women's Chorus from Charlottesville Day School.

There was no admission charge for the concert, but tax-deductible donations to the Shelter for Help in Emergency were encouraged. The Shelter's mission is to end domestic violence in the community by "providing a safe, supportive, confidential and respectful environment" that empowers survivors of domestic violence. Each year it provides services to more than 400 adults and children. 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.

The concert also coincided with Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. Each year, 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner. Earlier on Saturday, the Shelter conducted a series of workshops for the participating vocalists at Monticello High School on healthy relationships and how to reduce incidents of domestic violence.

For the program finale, all performers came together on stage to sing a special arrangement by Jennings of *Scar*, a 2004 recording by Missy Higgins that sold more than one million copies.