

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES UPDATE

THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR ALBEMARLE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS—MAY 2016

OVERVIEW

Horizon 2020, the Albemarle County Public Schools' Strategic Plan, consists of one, overarching goal for our system:

All students will graduate prepared for citizenship, post-secondary education and workforce entry levels as evidenced by multiple indicators of lifelong learning competencies.

Within the Horizon 2020 plan, the Albemarle County School Board has identified five objectives for the school division:

- **We will engage every student**
- **We will implement balanced assessments**
- **We will improve opportunity and achievement**
- **We will create and expand partnerships**
- **We will optimize resources**

Central staff reports on the division's progress toward meeting these goals and objectives multiple times throughout the year, and each biennium the school board reviews, revises and adopts strategic priorities that will push the division toward achieving success and meeting the challenge outlined in the Horizon 2020 motto of "Unleashing Each Student's Potential." In the fall of 2015, the board adopted the following strategic priorities for the 2015-2107 biennium:

- **All students will graduate prepared for citizenship, post-secondary education, and workforce entry levels as evidenced by multiple indicators of lifelong learning competencies.**
- **Increase the number of students accruing college credits and career pathway credentials prior to graduation.**
- **Increase the efficacy of our instructional staff by developing the pedagogical expertise essential to contemporary learning.**
- **Achieve a fully-funded capital and operational budget that meets the school system's needs for learning space modernization, instructional innovation, digitized learning, and competitive recruitment and retention of personnel. Optimize the use of all allocated fiscal resources to meet the goals of the division.**

The following report will serve to update the school board on the key strategies that are being implemented to achieve success on each priority, and will report on several formative indicators of our progress so far this biennium.

TELLING OUR STORY

A crucial component of the effectiveness of a strategic plan is the degree to which the key stakeholders in the plan understand the connections between the goals and objectives of the plan and the work that they do in their schools each and every day. The year, Albemarle County Public Schools has placed a high degree of emphasis on ensuring that these connections are clear and that they are publicly acknowledged. Avenues we have pursued to meet this goal include a redesigned school improvement planning process in which school leaders were provided with enhanced levels of feedback about their work and its connection to the plan, the publication of the [Horizon 2020 Update](#) newsletter that explicitly shows the connections between our strategic objectives and our work, and the publication of the [Albemarle Innovators](#) newsletter which celebrates the work of our incredibly talented instructional staff. In short, when we can tell the story of our work and its impact on our school and our community, the connections between our practices and our goals and objectives become clear.

In the spirit of telling our story, the update to the strategic priorities is being presented in a new way this year. While some quantitative data will be provided to the board, the heart of our evaluation is going to be measured by looking at examples of our strategic plan in practice within each of our schools. This report is designed to provide all information needed by the board to rate the impact of each of our four strategic priorities and consists of the following items:

- **Horizon 2020 In Our Schools**—reports from each of our schools about the work that they are doing to meet our strategic objectives. (Sent to the board as a separate file)
- **Division Highlights**—Key initiatives and data points from the 2015-2016 school year that show the impact our work is having toward meeting our strategic priorities.
- **Division Metrics**—Formative and summative indicators of our work toward achieving our strategic objectives can be found through links to the State of the Division Report which is now being continually updated throughout the school year.
- **School Improvement Plans**—Each year, principals work with a team of administrators, school staff and community members to create a personalized strategic improvement plan for their school. They use these to set goals for the year around academic achievement, professional development and school climate and culture. The school SIP teams monitor and update their progress each quarter, and submit updates that are posted to the division web page. The most up-to-date school strategic improvement plans can be found [here](#). Note: schools that are in “priority” or “focus” status complete the state mandated Indistar improvement plan and do not complete an ACPS SIP.

DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

PRIORITY ONE-- ALL STUDENTS WILL GRADUATE PREPARED FOR CITIZENSHIP, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, AND WORKFORCE ENTRY LEVELS AS EVIDENCED BY MULTIPLE INDICATORS OF LIFELONG LEARNING COMPETENCIES.

- **High School Academies**—The high school academy program in ACPS continues to grow with the **Environmental Studies Academy at Western expanding to include tenth grade students** and both the Math, Engineering and Science Academy at Albemarle and the Health and Medical Sciences Academy at Monticello serving students in grades 9-12. In total, our academies **serve the needs of 460 students** in the division. **24% of the students attending academies in ACPS are minority students.** This program will continue to grow with the Environmental Studies Academy scheduled to serve students in all grade levels over the next two academic years.
- **Digital Citizenship Curriculum**—Albemarle County Public Schools’ philosophy on internet use in education is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and telecommunications as outlined in the Technology Acceptable Use policy and applicable regulations. It is critical that all teachers and staff maintain a safe, flexible, and effective learning environment for all students. The [Digital Citizenship Curriculum](#) **consists of over 70 lessons for grade bands, K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12,** and are made available in an effort to assist educators with designing meaningful learning experiences for students around responsible, ethical, effective, and safe use of technology.
- **Community Tech Nights**—As our use of technology as an instructional tool continues to increase in our schools, communication about the safe and effective use of educational technology with all community members becomes an increasingly important aspect of the work we do as a division. This year, the division sponsored four **Community Tech Nights** to help educate our stakeholders about such topics as internet safety, social media, screen time and digital citizenship. The nights were a combination of hands-on exposure to our instructional technology, a presentation to our parents, and a discussion panel. **Over 100 community members attended** the four tech nights.
- **Performance Assessment Data**—ACPS has developed and implemented 31 performance tasks in grades K-12 that are designed to measure how prepared students were to be active and engaged members of their community. For the 2015-2106 school year, data continues to be collected and disaggregated for our division performance tasks and will be updated in the state of the division website as soon as it becomes available. All performance task data for the 2014-2015 school year, by school, can be viewed [here](#). The two areas from 2014-2015 in which students are showing the **highest rates of proficiency at LLLC5--Seek, recognize, and understand systems, patterns, themes, and interactions with 64% of students showing mastery and LLLC6--Apply and adapt a variety of appropriate strategies to solve new and increasingly complex problems with 66% of students showing mastery.**

- **Legislative Priorities**—For the year’s general assembly session, the board put forward legislative priorities in eight different areas. We were successful in achieving three of our goals. **Assessment and Accountability**—we advocated for assessment methods that reinforce the interdisciplinary instructional model of the current century by promoting problem-solving, critical thinking and analysis, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills. These concepts were adopted in what came to be known as the high school redesign bill; work in this area is expected to continue (i.e., creating a portrait of a Virginia high school graduate). **Stop-arm cameras**—the board advocated for legislation to allow tickets to be mailed to offenders who pass stopped school busses. This legislation was signed into law by the governor. **VHSL activities for non-ACPS students**—the board advocated for clear guidelines around eligibility if this legislation were to pass. Legislation allowing participation passed both houses, but was vetoed by the governor.
- **Entrepreneurship**—We believe that **entrepreneurial thinking is a life skill** —a business is just one manifestation of entrepreneurship — and continue to **expand opportunities for students to develop and actualize their own ideas formally and informally**. Examples from the 2015-2016 school year of these opportunities include [Startup Weekend EDU](#), the [TomTom Youth Summit](#) and pitch competition, **entrepreneurship courses** offered for credit in middle and high schools, youth **entrepreneurship workshops in conjunction with the [iLab at UVA](#)**, developing a “**High School Changemakers**” program that provides support for youth entrepreneurs through community partnerships and mentors, and a new, **high school credit earning summer program** being planned with support from a VDOE innovation grant—“**Design+Make+Launch.**”

PRIORITY TWO-- INCREASE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ACCRUING COLLEGE CREDITS AND CAREER PATHWAY CREDENTIALS PRIOR TO GRADUATION.

- **Academic and Career Planning Software**—The division is in the final stages of adopting the **Naviance, a college and career readiness platform that helps connect academic achievement to post-secondary college and career goals.** Naviance is an online tool that will be used with all secondary students next year to assist them with **career exploration and self-discovery, K-12 academic planning and college and career preparation.** Some long-term benefits that Naviance will provide for the division include a **streamlining of the college application process, an interactive tool for academic planning** that could help us determine future needs for work-based learning partners, and the **creation of digital academic plans** for all secondary students.
- **Work-based Learning and Internships**— We believe offering a suite of authentic work-based learning (WBL) opportunities enhances the high school experience and better prepares students for citizenship, post-secondary education, and workforce entry. This year, our career specialists have documented over **2,100 work based learning or internship experiences** for our students. These experiences include **320 job shadowing experiences, 344 mentoring experiences, 305 internship experiences and 1,139 service learning experiences.** More information on the classifications of these work-based learning and internship experiences can be found [here](#).
- **Pathways Program**—The pathways program in our high schools is designed to provide all students an opportunity to concentrate their areas of study on experiences about which they are passionate. There is currently an Arts and Letters Pathway which has been **in place at Albemarle High School since the 2014-2015 school year.** This pathway has **expanded to Western Albemarle High School this year** and provides students an opportunity to choose from over **ten areas of concentration** in areas such as creative writing, theater, band, orchestra and art. Students enroll in a pathway during their freshman or sophomore year, follow a prescribed course of study in their area of concentration and also complete internships, community service and a capstone project related to their concentration. **A STEM pathway will launch at Albemarle High School in the 2016-2017 school year.**
- **CATEC**—Beginning next year, CATEC will expand its programs by opening the Cisco lab and offering CTE experiences to ninth grade students for the first time. The Cisco lab will allow students, over the course of two years, **to earn a Cisco Certified Entry Network Technician certification and/or a Cisco Certified Network Associate certification.** There are nearly thirty students enrolled in this program for next year. The CATEC ninth grade program will offer students **four different elective experiences of their choice,** and has over 100 students enrolled so far. Finally, nearly all courses taught at CATEC have moved to **dual enrollment status with PVCC** with the hopes that students will have a head start as they move from CATEC into a degree program at PVCC.

- **Homework Policy**—Over the past two school years, ACPS central staff has been conducting a review of the division homework policy that responds to concerns raised by the ACPS School Health Advisory Board about the amount and quality of homework our students do. Initially, a committee of school administrators, teachers, and counselors met to review research on homework and to examine policies other divisions use. As a part of the process of studying our current practices, committee members have met with the **County Student Council, Parent Council, the School Health Advisory Board, School Principals, and the Teacher Advisory Committee for their input**. A draft policy was presented to the board on May 12, 2016 that proposes **clear guidelines on the purpose, type, amount and duration of homework for students by grade level**, so that we can help better ensure reasonable amounts of meaningful work is being assigned to students.

PRIORITY THREE-- INCREASE THE EFFICACY OF OUR INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF BY DEVELOPING THE PEDAGOGICAL EXPERTISE ESSENTIAL TO CONTEMPORARY FORMATIVE INDICATORS

- **PBL Training**—This summer a pilot partnership will launch with the Buck Institute. Buck is the **nationally recognized leader in training and implementation programs for Project Based Learning**. During the training **seventy classroom teachers, coaches, learning technology integrators, and school administrators** from our middle and high schools will complete PBL101 training. At the end of the training, each participating team will have developed a PBL unit to implement with their students in the fall. This will serve as a great jumping off point for developing our understanding of the implementation and impact of experiences with Project Based Learning.
- **Open Digital Portfolio Project**—This year Albemarle County Public Schools has **partnered with Maker-Ed and the Indiana University Open Portfolio Project to expand the practice of students creating and curating digital portfolios of their work**. A group of teachers and administrators from Burley Middle School and Monticello High School spent time this year attending a **digital portfolio workshop**. This work is connecting them with a nationwide group of educators who **are working collaboratively to develop protocols for the creation of digital portfolios**. Each year, we hope to continue expanding this project so that all students have a digital portfolio of their work that highlights their strengths as a student and can be used as they apply to colleges or head out to the world of work.
- **OER Workshops**—In February and March, Andy Mink from [the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education](#) conducted **training with 41 math and language arts teachers**. The training focused on the both the process and product of Open Educational Resources – retaining, reusing, revising, remixing, and redistributing of online teaching and learning materials that are available for anyone to use. This work has served to further the professional development of our teachers as they **continue integrating digital curriculum into their lessons** as one of the seven pathways to lifelong learner competencies.
- **Dan Mulligan Training**—In April, Dan Mulligan of Flexible Creativity conducted a **workshop with over fifty teachers**: “A Vertical Approach to Meeting the Rigor of Mathematics Standards.” The workshop focused on working in professional learning communities **to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds meet and exceed mathematics standards**. Dan will be back to work with more teachers in late September.
- **Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction Institute**—each June, over 200 teachers and administrators are invited to meet for three days of professional development focused around the areas of Curriculum, Assessment or Instruction. Last June, **we had 243 teachers and administrators** and the theme of CAI was designing instruction for contemporary learning and allowed teams of teachers and administrators to work together **designing learning experiences for students that give them meaningful opportunities to develop lifelong**

learner competencies. This year, the focus of CAI will be on teams of teachers developing **interdisciplinary units** of instruction centered around the concepts of authentic, problem-based learning.

- **Responsive Classroom/Developmental Designs Training**—Albemarle is continuing our commitment to the implementation of Responsive Classroom in all of our elementary schools and the expansion of the Developmental Designs program to our middle schools. Both of these programs are **designed to build a strong community of learners within a school.** This summer, we will offer **Developmental Designs training to 30 teachers, Responsive Classroom training to 90 teachers, and Advanced Responsive Classroom training to 90 teachers.**
- **Human Resources**—The Albemarle County Public School Division had **98% of its teachers meet the No Child Left Behind Highly Qualified requirement** for the 2014-2015 school year. Concerted efforts are made during the hiring process to make sure that all new teachers are considered Highly Qualified, and that all teachers in the Division only teach subjects in which they are endorsed. Our **teacher retention rate for the 2014-2015 year was 88.6%.** **Over 300 screening interviews** have been conducted so far this year. These interviews have provided hiring managers **deeper insight into the credentials of candidates** and has saved them time in screening applicants.
- **Learning Technology Integrators**—This year, the Department of Assessment, Research, and Technology launched the Learning Technology Integrator team. **LTI's are assigned to secondary schools and support the integration of contemporary technology into learning spaces.** Their work includes such things as **supporting development of the seven pathways, co-teaching and demonstrations with classroom teachers, and helping schools achieve their learning engagement goals.** Division-wide focus areas revolve around game-based learning, immersive instructional environments, digital citizenship skill development and entrepreneurial engineering. This year the LTI's **had over 1,200 contacts with educators** focused around this work.

PRIORITY FOUR--ACHIEVE A FULLY-FUNDED CAPITAL AND OPERATIONAL BUDGET THAT MEETS THE SCHOOL SYSTEM'S NEEDS FOR LEARNING SPACE MODERNIZATION, INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATION, DIGITIZED LEARNING, AND COMPETITIVE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF PERSONNEL. OPTIMIZE THE USE OF ALL ALLOCATED FISCAL RESOURCES TO MEET THE GOALS OF THE DIVISION

- **Operational Budget**—The board put forward an operational budget request of \$174,163,445 to the Albemarle Board of Supervisors. A budget was passed in the spring which allocated \$172,672,938 to the school system, which equates to **achieving 99.1% of a fully funded operational budget request.**
- **Capital Improvements**—Four major capital improvement projects were completed during the 2015-2016 school year. The first was **security improvements at Cale Elementary School and Western Albemarle High School.** This project involved constructing a new security entrance foyer with a side door leading directly to a new/renovated office area. The second project was **the newly constructed learning space for the Environmental Studies Academy at Western Albemarle High School.** The space consists of a modern learning lab/instructional space, a state of the art greenhouse, and an outdoor garden and is designed to integrate students with the surrounding natural environment where they will develop their understanding of subjects such as Biology, Ecology, Environmental Science and Horticulture. Finally, the **new fitness center at Henley Middle School** opened for student use in April. The fitness center has two main components—a large, multi-purpose space with a turf field, and a smaller fitness room that includes multiple stations, allowing for over twenty students to participate in different fitness activities concurrently. All told, these projects are the culmination of a \$4,000,000 investment in our schools.
- **ACPS in the News**—The Strategic Communications Office works hard to celebrate our achievements and communicate our message to the larger Albemarle County community. An **archive of local coverage of the Albemarle County Public School can be found [here](#)** courtesy of Charlottesville Tomorrow.
- **Bond Referendum**—On May 12, 2016, the School Board approved a request to the Board of Supervisors for a November 2016 **\$35.5 million bond referendum** to fund capital improvement projects. The Board of Supervisors is considering this request and is scheduled to vote on it at their June 1, 2016, meeting. The items for the referendum include **\$10.9 million to modernize classrooms across the division; \$15.2 million to build a 16 classroom addition and to renovate Woodbrook Elementary School; \$6 million to add three science classrooms and modernize another seven at Western Albemarle High School; \$2.9 million for security improvements at Baker-Butler Elementary, Scottsville Elementary, Henley Middle and Murray High; and \$.5 million for planning the high school overcrowding situation at Albemarle High School.**

- **Broadband Access**—The program for launching **community broadband access to our students** is moving out of the pilot stage and into implementation. Currently the program is **fully functional in Southwood** as a community wifi network. Next steps for the program include making residential **deployments of antennas that will allow up to thirty percent of the southern feeder pattern to have access to broadband** internet via the ACPS network. Residents within the service area will be notified of this service in the fall. **Total build out county wide is expected by 2019.**
- **HR Broadbanding**-- Broadbanding is a compensation method that **groups jobs into large pay bands**, resulting in a pay structure with fewer grades and wider salary ranges. This creates an environment conducive for staff to acquire varied experiences to **assist with professional growth and succession planning**. We believe that this program will encourage staff who would like to gain different experiences through the variety of leadership positions offered by our school division by allowing staff to change jobs within a band without the perception of a demotion or promotion. This initiative is intended to align compensation with Division needs; namely, to include more flexibility in salary administration in the event of voluntary movement from one role to another; provide greater emphasis on succession planning; facilitate career enrichment opportunities; and support strong team building. HR will **evaluate pilot program costs and effectiveness throughout the 3-year pilot program** and present the results to the School Board on an annual basis.
- **Transportation efficiencies**—This year the transportation department **partnered with JAUNT on their RFP for purchasing fuel**. By doing so, they are able to increase the volume of their yearly purchase, which should allow for better pricing and an overall cost savings to the division. In addition to this, the department has **maintained a 98% on-time arrival rating** for the second year in a row, and has **achieved a 99.5% on-time departure rating** for field trips and athletic events.
- **Program evaluation**—A comprehensive program evaluation of our community use of school facilities was completed this year. The goal of the evaluation was to **determine the actual costs and revenues of this program, to determine whether changes to fees need to be considered if revenues were not sufficient to cover costs, and to determine whether any other changes to the program were warranted**. The results of the evaluation showed that community use of school facilities was having an impact on our facilities that was **disproportionate to the amount of revenue being generated** by the use. As a result of this evaluation, staff put forward several recommendations to the board including raising fees by 7.5%, allowing for-profit use of facilities and developing an MOU between parks and rec and the board around the maintenance and supervision of all joint use areas. If fully implemented, these recommendations may result in **potential annual savings to the division of \$60,000.**

DIVISION METRICS

This year the ACPS State of the Division report has been moved to an online format. Metrics contained within the report are updated on a regular basis and serve as the most current reflection of the work we are doing in our schools.

ENGAGE EVERY STUDENT

[Student engagement data as measured through learning walks](#)

[Fine Arts Enrollment Data](#)

[Career and Technical Education Enrollment Data](#)

[English as a Second or Other Language Data](#)

[Special Education Data](#)

IMPLEMENT BALANCED ASSESSMENTS

[Elementary Literacy and Numeracy Screening](#)

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[Elementary Climate Survey](#)

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[SOL Scores 2013-2015](#)

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