

## Message from the School Board Chair

Dear Chair Andrews and all Supervisors,

First, let me extend my sincere gratitude for your ongoing dedication to Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) as we embark on the annual budget planning process. Your unwavering support of public education in our community has been instrumental in fostering a nurturing educational environment for all our students.

As I reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, I take great pride in the collaborative efforts of our students, educators, staff, families, and community partners in aligning with the objectives outlined in our strategic plan, *Learning for All*. It is through these strong partnerships, both within and beyond our school walls, that we will live up to the values that ACPS upholds in *Learning for All*: equity, excellence, family and community, and wellness.

Despite the countless challenges facing public education nationwide, we are fortunate to have the ongoing backing of the Albemarle County community. Thus, I am committed to ensuring transparency and fiscal responsibility in our budgetary decisions. Every dollar must be utilized in a way that we know will advance public education in our community.

As we chart our course for the upcoming year with this budget, our primary aim remains the continuity and enhancement of our existing initiatives. Rather than initiating new endeavors, our focus lies in sustaining and fortifying the programs that have proven effective in nurturing student growth and achievement.

Foremost among our priorities is the promotion of literacy and the cultivation of a culture of reading within our schools. Recognizing that reading proficiency is fundamental to academic success and lifelong learning, we intend to allocate resources toward hiring additional reading and intervention specialists, maintaining manageable class sizes, and prioritizing teacher compensation. We will implement a new elementary reading curriculum with the new budget, and we are dedicated to delivering this updated literacy program to our students effectively and with fidelity through high-quality training for our educators.

Moreover, we are attuned to growing challenges with regard to student support, such as the increasing prevalence of mental health concerns among students. Accordingly, we are committed to ensuring that our budget addresses these evolving needs by maintaining and, in some cases, bolstering related support services. We have also had tremendous growth in our county among English language learners, which enriches both our community and our schools. Those students require appropriate language acquisition programs to grow and thrive at the pace they deserve. This budget reflects that need.

The stewardship of our budget is a weighty responsibility, and we are steadfast in our commitment to prudent fiscal management. Our overarching goal is to provide every student with the necessary resources and support to thrive academically, regardless of the obstacles they may encounter.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation for your continued collaboration and partnership in advancing the mission of Albemarle County Public Schools. Together, we will continue to foster a dynamic learning environment where every student has the opportunity to excel.

Warm regards,



Judy Le

Chair, Albemarle County School Board