



# Board-to-Board

December 2008

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

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**Telephone Town Hall November 12:** On November 12, the Albemarle County School Board hosted its second Telephone Town Hall to obtain constituent input on the Superintendent's Funding Request. Participants were asked polling questions, had the opportunity to ask questions of panelists and heard from the School Board chair, vice-chair, superintendent, assistant superintendent and the executive director of fiscal services about the budgetary implications for various programs and services. In addition, an online feedback forum was created where constituents could respond to the same five polling questions addressed in the Telephone Town Hall as well as leave their comments or concerns. Constituent input gathered from these venues will help inform the Superintendent's Funding Request, which will be presented to the Board in December.

More than 4,500 households of employees, Albemarle county residents and parents were reached using the Telephone Town Hall, and nearly 1,100 constituents elected to stay on the line for at least 30 minutes to participate. By the end of the hour-long meeting, almost 500 constituents remained on the line and responded overwhelmingly that they would participate in such an event again (98.5%). The total cost of the Telephone Town Hall, including an additional reminder call two days prior, was \$3,291.60. With 29,801 households called, the cost is then 11 cents per call, or 71 cents per constituent reached. More than 50 participants left voicemail messages at the end of the Town Hall, expressing additional questions or comments. These have been transcribed and addressed and are posted on the 09-10 Budget web site at [www.k12albemarle.org](http://www.k12albemarle.org). A recording of the Telephone Town Hall is also available there.

**Crozet Elementary School Boundary Changes:** At the November 6<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, the superintendent presented her recommendation for the attendance boundary changes to alleviate overcrowding at Crozet Elementary School. Of the four options considered, the superintendent recommended Option #3, Grayrock, as it achieves the objectives with the least amount of neighborhood disruption. Approximately 100 elementary students from the Grayrock, Waylands Grant, and Bargamin Park subdivisions will move to Brownsville Elementary School beginning in 2009-10 under this recommendation. The Board will vote on the superintendent's recommendation at the December 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Schools Safety Report:** The Board received its annual Schools Safety Report at its November meeting. This report included the Virginia Department of Education 2007-08 Discipline, Crime and Violence Verification, the Driver Education Teen Safety Report, and the report on the Enterprise Center. The Discipline, Crime, and Violence Report is submitted electronically to the Virginia Department of Education on a yearly basis. Data is collected at each Albemarle County School for the 365-day period beginning June 20 and ending June 19 of the following year. The data collected meets the

reporting requirements for the No Child Left Behind performance indicator, the state School Performance Report Card, and other federal and state statutes regarding individuals with disabilities and guns, violence and drugs in schools.

In general during the 2007-08 school year, incidents of alcohol possession or use, battery, disrespect, drug possession/use, threats to students/staff, possession of look-alike weapons and knives under 3 inches, and theft of school property decreased. Incidents of reported bullying increased but incidents of harassment declined. Incidents of tobacco use declined but tobacco possession increased. The number of cases referred to the School Hearing Officer was up to 194 in 2007-08 over 170 in 2006-07, Other data is available in the report.

**Human Resources Update:** The Board received a preliminary Annual Report from Human Resources in November. This report detailed teacher hiring for the current school year, and gave updates on employee retention and minority recruiting efforts. It also provided information about the ethnic distribution of classified, teaching and administrative employees, the age distribution of the School Division's workforce, and retirements and resignations for the past 5 years.

**Annual Progress Report:** The 2007-08 School Division Annual Progress Report was presented to the Board at its November work session. The report contains audited financial and demographic data regarding students and operations. Some of these data include audited per pupil expenditure for 2007-08 of \$11,507. Other key data for 2007-08 are: average annual teacher salary of \$50,940, average of 14 years of teaching experience division-wide, and 58% of ACPS teachers have a master's degree or above.

The board also received a quarterly report on the implementation of the Framework for Quality Learning across the division. Representatives from three schools: Greer Elementary, Henley Middle and Albemarle High School, worked with board members and central office to discuss current achievement at these schools using formative assessment data gathered through the end of the first quarter.

**Be There Campaign:** Albemarle County Public Schools has partnered with Charlottesville City Schools to participate in the "Be There" parent involvement campaign. This is the first time the Parent Councils from both school divisions have worked together. "Be There" is a national campaign produced by Voss & Associates and endorsed by the National School Board Association, the Parent Institute, and many other community and educational organizations. The program uses media, not classrooms, to inspire parents to be engaged in their children's lives, and to discover "teachable moments" in everyday tasks. Parent involvement is a key correlate to student achievement, so the program aims to close achievement gaps by building adult-student relationships. The professionally produced campaign is free to the participating school systems, with the exception of printing costs for the materials.

**Making Connections:** As part of the School Board's priority related to Strategic Plan Goal #3, to recruit, retain, and develop a diverse cadre of the highest quality teaching personnel, the annual Making Connections professional development conference was held on Monday, November 3. Educators from

across the county gathered to listen to Steven Levy discuss the tenets of expeditionary learning. Presenting in the morning to elementary educators gathered at Monticello and in the early afternoon to secondary educators at Western Albemarle High, Levy talked about eight high-yield instructional strategies that are as effective, if not more effective, than one-on-one tutoring in bringing about learning for a child. Levy's presentation primarily focused on the power of formative, descriptive feedback, and how it not only challenges students to reach to a higher level, it provides them the tools to know how to get there. Teachers then met in Division-level Professional Learning Communities, and in school-level PLCs to continue work on their staff development plans which were begun at the Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction Institute in June.

Also, as part of the professional development initiatives toward goal #3, and to continue Board priorities for Goal #1 and Goal #2, school leaders and administration participated in consecutive workshops with John Antonetti, a national educational consultant who has worked with the school system over the past three years to implement the Teacher Performance Appraisals and Learning Walks. These "L-Walks" are where administrators and teacher-leaders visit classrooms looking for the use of the high-yield instructional strategies, higher level of cognitive thinking, and for student engagement. Antonetti held workshops with staff on November 10 and 11.

**Professional Learning Community Discussions:** At their leveled principals meetings in October, each school principal was given a Flip video camera, a small digital video camera that can record up to one hour of web-quality video. Their assignment was to record Professional Learning Community discussions at their school, places where teachers are getting together to learn from each other about what strategies are working in the classrooms and what interventions may be necessary to increase student learning. Principals then returned to the November leveled meeting with evidence of their PLC work in hand. By sharing their videos and looking at the different types of discussions about student achievement that are taking place across the division, principals were challenged to reflect upon what is possible through PLCs and how the PLC work at their school compares to the Division's goals and the work in other schools across the system. This work is part of the Board's priorities for Goal #2, eliminate the achievement gap.

**December Meetings:** The School Board will hold its regular meeting on December 11<sup>th</sup>. In addition, there is a joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors scheduled for December 9<sup>th</sup>, the superintendent's funding request presentation scheduled for December 17<sup>th</sup>, and a tentative student conduct meeting scheduled for December 16<sup>th</sup>.