



Board-to-Board

June 2009

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

Administrative Appointments: At its meeting last night, the Albemarle County School Board appointed three new principals for the Division.

- **Mr. Jay Thomas** was appointed principal for Albemarle High School. Thomas is currently the principal of South Lenoir High School in Kinston, North Carolina, a position he has held since 2005. He has also served as an assistant principal and school improvement specialist of Landstown High School and Technology Academy in Virginia Beach, and has experience at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Thomas received a Master's of Science in education and an endorsement in administration and supervision from Old Dominion University. He earned his Bachelor's of Arts in education from Fairmont State College in Fairmont, West Virginia. He impressed the interview panel with his deep understanding of concept-based learning, integration of technology in instruction in meaningful ways, and proven track record of strong leadership and raising student achievement.
- **Dr. Catherine Worley** was named principal for Monticello High School. Dr. Worley is currently principal of Jones Magnet Middle School and Gifted Center in Hampton, Virginia, where she leads more than 900 students and more than 80 teachers. She has also served as assistant principal at Phoebus High School and Spratley Middle School in Hampton. She has also worked as an elementary, middle and high school music teacher and choral director for Newport News Public Schools. Dr. Worley received her Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. She also holds a Master's of Science in Educational Leadership from Old Dominion University and a two degrees – a Bachelor of Science in Music Education and a Bachelor of Arts in Music Therapy – from Radford University. The interview panel highlighted her diverse background, strong leadership track record, and continual use of innovative strategies that promote student engagement and learning in every position she has held.
- **Ms. Sharon Amato-Wilcox** was named principal of Burley Middle School. Ms. Wilcox currently serves as assistant principal of Burley, a position she has held since 2008. Prior to that, she was principal of Kyrene de la Estrella Elementary School in Tempe, Arizona for seven years. She also was assistant principal of Kyrene de la Sierra Elementary School for six years, and has served as an elementary and middle school special education teacher, leadership coach and curriculum coordinator in Arizona. In addition to post-graduate certificates in special education from Northern Arizona University and educational administration from Arizona State University, Amato-Wilcox holds a Master's of Education in Reading and a Bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Arizona. Her visionary leadership focused on continuous improvement of systems, processes and staff in order to drive increased student achievement, as well as her proven ability to create collaborative school cultures where teachers, parents and community members work together to foster quality instruction and student success led to her selection among the candidates.

Teleforum and Small Schools: The School Division hosted a Telephone Forum on Monday, May 18th to gather feedback about the county's smallest elementary schools. The facilities planning committee is considering two options: 1) renovate Yancey, Red Hill and Scottsville elementary schools, or 2) close them and build a new school near Walton Middle School to serve all of those students. Dr. Moran is scheduled to bring a recommendation to the Board in August.

Listening Tours: During Teacher Appreciation Week, Board members and staff conducted listening tours at all Albemarle County Public Schools. The tours were conducted as a beginning stage in the Strategic Planning process and to gather input from teachers on issues within the division and where they see the division going in the future.

Title I Distinguished Schools: Five Albemarle County elementary schools are among the 124 schools in the commonwealth being honored by the Virginia Board of Education for raising the academic achievement of economically disadvantaged students. The awards are based on student achievement on state assessments during 2007-2008 and the previous school year.

Paul H. Cale Elementary, Red Hill Elementary, Scottsville Elementary, Stony Point Elementary and Woodbrook Elementary have been recognized as "Title I Distinguished Schools" for maintaining full state accreditation under the commonwealth's Standards of Learning program for two consecutive years, and meeting or exceeding No Child Left Behind (NCLB) benchmarks in reading and mathematics for all students.

National Merit Scholars for 2009: Albemarle County Public Schools has ten students from all three county high schools designated National Merit Scholars this year.

- Two students from **Monticello High** received the honor: Patricia Fernandez was awarded a National Merit University of Chicago Scholarship and Timothy Pianta has been awarded a National Merit Scholarship to attend Washington University in St. Louis.
- Three students from **Western Albemarle High** were named National Merit Scholars: Joshua Dugan, who received the National Merit Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology Scholarship; Wesley Swank, who will attend the California Institute of Technology as a National Merit scholar, courtesy of Consol Energy Inc.; and Whitney Wenger, who received a National Merit Northwestern University Scholarship but has instead chosen to attend Cornell University.
- Five students from **Albemarle High** received National Merit Scholarships: Roger Fan was offered a National Merit University of Chicago Scholarship, Caitlyn Suhler was offered a National Merit Washington and Lee University Scholarship, and Cameron Hill received a National Merit Northrop Grumman Scholarship and plans to attend Brown University. Valentina Moshnikova and Amy Pugh each received a \$2,500 National Merit Scholarship; Moshnikova plans to attend the College of William and Mary and Pugh will attend Davidson College.

Less than one-half of one-percent of the 1.5 million high school students in the United States who take the qualifying exam each year are selected as National Merit Scholars.

MESA: The Albemarle County Math Engineering and Science Academy will be implemented at Albemarle High School for 2009-10 and beyond. Here students will participate in math and science core classes in a modified curriculum that focuses on practical applications, collaboration and experimentation. In the upper levels of the program students will design and team-build projects and have the opportunity to work with engineering professionals in the Charlottesville community. They will focus on offering solutions to engineering problems locally and beyond our community.

Forty-nine rising 9th graders from across the division applied for admission and were accepted. Fourteen rising 11th graders from across the division applied and all were accepted. Over the summer MESA director, Jeff Prillaman will work with Steve Bantz to work on further development of the curriculum.

The MESA website can be found at www.k12albemarle.org/mesa.

June Meetings: The School Board will hold its regular meeting on June 11th and its regular work session on June 25th. In addition, we look forward to meeting with you on June 10th.