

2015-2017 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This report is prepared to assist the ACPS School Board in developing the strategic priorities for the coming biennium in support of the ACPS Horizon 2020 Strategic Plan.

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Overview

One Student Centered Goal

All Albemarle County Public Schools students will graduate having actively mastered the lifelong-learning skills they need to succeed as 21st century learners, workers and citizens.

The driving force behind all of the work that we do as a school division is captured in this one student centered goal. From the time students first arrive in Kindergarten until the day they walk across the stage as ACPS graduates, all of our efforts are geared toward student success in these areas.

The Division's Strategic Priorities provide the targets toward which our collective effort and resources should be aimed in order to realize our goal. As we enter a new biennial cycle with our strategic planning, it is appropriate to review our priorities and decide how they can be revised using adjust/adopt/abandon methodology to give us the highest probability of developing students into 21st century learners, workers and citizens.

The priorities are all aligned to the five objectives that the board has identified in the Horizon 2020 Strategic Plan:

- Objective One: We will engage every student.
- Objective Two: We will implement balanced assessments.
- Objective Three: We will improve opportunity and achievement.
- Objective Four: We will create and expand partnerships.
- Objective Five: We will optimize resources.

Refining our priorities will help us to focus appropriately on our most critical needs. During the 2013-2015 biennium, the board had eleven identified strategic priorities. At the board retreat in June, board members identified the following six strategic priorities as the most important to continue in the strategic plan:

- Effective Teaching Practices
- Professional Development
- Contemporary Learning Spaces
- World Language Program
- Work-based Learning and Field Trips
- Optimizing Fiscal Resources

Recently Albemarle County released the results of the National Citizens Survey. Some key results from that survey show that the priorities identified by the board at the retreat are closely related to what citizens feel are important areas of focus for our schools. When asked how important it was for Albemarle County Public Schools to focus on certain areas, the following percentage of respondents ranked these as either "essential" or "very important":

- Student to teacher ratio—89%
- Student performance—89%
- Parent Involvement—85%
- Modern, efficient and well maintained classrooms—84%
- Professional development for instructional staff—82%
- Enrichment opportunities—82%

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- Special education needs—81%

With this feedback in mind, the Superintendent's Cabinet has been working to create four suggested priorities for the coming biennium that retain a focus on the areas listed above as they move the school division forward in our quest to unleash the potential of each and every student.

This report will serve as a starting point for the next level of discussion among the board as we present suggested priorities for this biennium.

Each proposed Strategic Priority addresses the following components:

- **Baseline Data:** the current levels of performance for ACPS in the identified area
- **Key Metric:** the single most relevant measure of progress toward the stated priority. This is oftentimes a long-term goal that will span the course of multiple years.
- **Rationale:** an explanation of why this is a necessary priority and how it is connected to our overarching goal
- **Annual Formative Indicators:** the annual measures that will indicate our progress toward this priority

As we begin the new Strategic Priority cycle, it is appropriate for the Board to review the proposed Strategic Priorities and determine the level of impact they will have in moving the division closer to realizing its mission and vision.

Strategic Priority/Target One

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

Rationale: Our one, student-centered goal states that students will graduate having actively mastered the lifelong-learning skills they need to succeed as 21st century learners, workers and citizens. The economy is changing rapidly based on new technologies and global corporate structures. Many middle class jobs, from skilled trades to professional roles, will likely disappear as technology marches forward. Students of today will be faced as adults tomorrow with an increasingly complex geo-political and environmentally challenged world. Lifelong Learner Competencies prepare students for their future. To ensure our students have the skills they need to become engaged citizens and viable members of the future workforce, we must help them develop skills that can be more effectively used by humans than machines, and actively engage students in developing healthy lifestyles, and becoming community contributors.

Objectives Addressed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Baseline Data:

- All students are participating in and data are reported by school for performance assessment tasks aligned with lifelong learning competencies.
- Some schools have piloted use of digital portfolios.
- Some high school staff have piloted use of in-depth learning projects and research in lieu of final exams.
- The parent portal allows parents to see student performance on division assessment tasks.
- Virtual coursework participation is tracked and reported.
- Partnerships are tracked and reported.

Key Metric: Criteria for a diploma seal indicating mastery of the ACPS Lifelong Learner Competencies will be developed by June 2016 and a pilot program for the seal will begin in the 2016-2017 school year. Performance data by school will show increases year-over-year through 2017. By 2020, 90% of ACPS graduates will earn a Lifelong Learner Competency diploma seal.

Annual Formative Indicators:

- By 2016, present the Board with action plan for implementing strategies to longitudinally archive and share individual student performance-based assessments with students and parents to show growth on Lifelong Learner Competencies
- Lifelong Learner Competencies will be tagged in digital portfolios by all secondary students as they participate in and develop knowledge of skilled trades and professional skills through their educational experiences
- Progress toward gaining Lifelong Learner Competencies will be reported each year by school grade bands—K-2, 3-5, 6-8. Schools will have access to individual student data to determine who is on track to meet benchmarks for Lifelong Learner Competencies.
- An increase in the number and percent of Jr/Sr students engaged in community-based learning experiences and virtual/blended courses that address both lifelong learning,

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transition experiences and capacity needs of high schools as compared to a model of only onsite course enrollment

- Increasing numbers of virtual course options each year through 2017
- Increase in number of courses taught through an interdisciplinary PBL model
- Integration of K-12 entrepreneurial learning opportunities and increased student participation in application of entrepreneurial skillsets across curricula
- Increase in numbers of students participating in a range of redesigned year-round, extra- and co-curricular and elective experiences including arts pathways, health/wellness, humanities, world languages and STEM experiences (arts, leadership, coding, CATEC, maker, fitness, and STEM-related academy model)
- Development of elementary world languages programming in two more schools by 2016
- Increase in partnerships progress with local workforce community and higher education specific to increasing student and educator access to a range of work experiences and career learning opportunities

Strategic Priority / Target Two

Increase the number of students accruing college credits and career pathway credentials prior to graduation.

Rationale: Students who build career pathways demonstrate multiple indicators of preparedness for post-secondary education and career entry. If students are to graduate having evolved a transitional plan for next steps after high school, they need to be actively engaged in considering options as they move from middle school to high school to adulthood. Career pathways work should begin in the middle school years and students should have a dynamic tool at their disposal to help them identify and modify their career pathways.

Objectives Addressed: 1, 3, 5

Baseline Data: In the class of 2015, 69% of graduates earned at least one passing score (3 or higher) on an AP test. 28% of graduates completed a CTE education program. We are working on creating additional data collection points that will tell us the unique number of individuals who earned an AP credit or a full CTE certification.

Key Metric: By June 2017, the number of students earning a college credit or CTE credential will have increased by 10% from our baseline data. By 2020, 90% of ACPS students will have done at least one of the following: earned at least one AP college credit, earned a dual enrollment college credit, completed a four-five year sequential elective experience with a culminating project, completed an ACPS career pathway program, completed a JR/Sr year independent study/internship project and/or earned CTE credentials in an area of career focus (note-a CTE credential is a requirement for students seeking a standard diploma).

Annual Formative Indicators:

- By 2016, Implement a dynamic, virtual career planning tool that, beginning in a student's seventh grade year, engages students, parents, counselors and teachers in knowledge about career possibilities and develops career readiness skills as they explore pathways
- Number/Percentage of students by demographic leaving middle school with advanced mathematics credits
- Number/Percentage of students leaving middle school with CTE/advanced manufacturing academy electives or exploratory participation.
- Number/Percentage of high school students by demographic w advanced CTE/STEM participation and credits (CATEC and high school academy models)
- Number/Percentage of high school students completing a work-based, independent study or practical learning experience
- Number/Percentage of middle school students, by demographic, earning a high school credit prior to ninth grade (Mathematics, World Language, CTE)
- Number/Percentage of eighth grade students in standard level classes compared to the percentage of sixth grade students in standard level classes
- Study the value of developing additional ACPS career pathways to reflect changes in student/community/workforce areas of interest
- Disaggregated graduation rate & advanced studies diploma rates by demographic
- Interviews/surveys with post -graduates
- Student climate indicates more highly engaged students year over year at all levels

Strategic Priority/Target Three

Increase the efficacy of our instructional staff by developing the pedagogical expertise essential to contemporary learning.

Rationale: The most effective teachers have high efficacy and demonstrate a strong desire to continually refine their instructional methodologies based on the needs of their students. Educators are serving students in schools with more challenging demographics and are preparing them for communities and careers that will be different than those of the 20th century. Ensuring our teachers take advantage of and apply high-quality professional development based upon new tools, new neuroscience learning research, and changing workforce and post-secondary learning needs, will ensure that our students have access to instruction that will build their proficiency in lifelong learner competencies. With the continued expansion and implementation of strong professional development opportunities, ACPS will enhance its profile as a highly sought after location for employment as we prepare to meet the challenges of a shrinking pool of qualified teachers.

Objectives Addressed: 1, 2, 3, 5

Baseline Data: Preliminary data from the 2014-2015 school year indicates an average TPA score of 3.63 on a scale of 1 to 5. Elementary school climate data indicated that 21% of students find school boring and that 33% of students are not made more curious by the work that they *do in school*. *Our HR department has implemented a screening and ranking process for new candidates to the division. Screened applicants are rated on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest rank. 62% of candidates who were screened for the 15-16 school year received rankings of 4 or above.*

Key Metric: Teachers who participate in division sponsored professional development are more likely to develop the pedagogical expertise essential to contemporary learning. ACPS will see an increase of 10% per year in the number of staff members taking division sponsored professional development classes above the required minimum. Learning walk data will also indicate that the frequency in observation of Lifelong Learner Competencies will increase for each competency year over year.

Performance task data as reported at the school level will show an increase at all schools each year through 2017. By 2020, 90% of ACPS graduates will earn a Lifelong Learner Competency seal on their diplomas.

Annual Formative Indicators:

- Year-over-year average TPA scores of instructional staff
- Year-over-year learning walk data will show an increase in higher order thinking skills, student engagement, choice and comfort and lifelong-learner standards
- Year-over-year school climate data will show more highly engaged and curious students
- The percentage of teachers working on long-term projects with instructional coaches will increase each year through 2017.
- Annual school improvement planning targets reported to board
- Middle and high school committee innovation projects reported to board
- Increase in personalized (virtual and face-to-face) professional development offerings and participation rates aligned with LLLC specific to strategic plan PD focus areas with 100 % participation target in 3 years

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- Increase opportunities for educators to engage in their own career pathway development to include workforce experiences in the community, mentorships, internships, and independent studies consistent with the strategic plan.

Strategic Priority/Target 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.

Rationale: The opening dates of schools in Albemarle County range from the 1930s to 2004. Additions have been built to address capacity and renovations completed for maintenance purposes. However, a strategic Capital Improvement Plan to analyze current modernization needs has not occurred until the last two years. In 2014, every classroom, library, cafeteria, gym, and office space was analyzed to determine modernization needs based upon both health and learning parameters. A Capital Improvement Plan was proposed to modernize all schools to ensure classroom equity and contemporary program delivery spaces. This is currently unfunded. In addition, changing demographics have increased the need for specialized services and support in schools with increasing levels of at-risk demographics. Per pupil funding has provided for minimal maintenance of operations and instructional programming since 2009. New programs such as academies and arts pathways have been introduced through efficiencies captured. Little funding for initiatives has been available.

Objectives Addressed: 3, 5

Baseline Data:

- Funds for needed capital improvements that impact capacity and modernization have been limited and below projected budget needs for at least 10 years.
- Inflation adjusted per-pupil funding has declined or stayed even since 2009 even as a greater share of the operational budget has been used to address both state mandates and competitive market recommendations for the county. This has resulted in a reduction in funds to address needs resultant from a growing at-risk demographic.
- Schools currently range in economic disadvantaged students from 7% to 77%
- Schools currently range in ESOL students from 3% to 40%
- Instructional space conditions survey included in the modernization report to the Board

Key Metric: By January 2016, 1) successfully negotiate funding for modernization and required capacity in the CIP 2) make universally available all digital learning resources.

Annual Formative Indicators:

- Create School Board legislative priorities focused around the development of more resources and funding from both local government and state sources.
- Build community-wide support for a fully-funded budget by engaging parents and community members in systemic learning opportunities that highlight the importance of excellent schools for the entire community. At least 2 community-wide events will be planned and implemented with parent advisory groups for 2015-16.
- Determine and use a benchmark rubric and assess our current resource levels and competencies for responding to our demographically and culturally diverse community.
- Research and report on possible alternative, creative strategies to address capacity needs including virtual learning opportunities. Progress report to the board by June 2016.

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- Develop a Board-driven communication plan to share accurate information about resource challenges, captured efficiencies and needs with parents, business community, and the greater community.
- Report to the board in June 2016 the results of research into alternative funding sources including the potential for an Albemarle specific foundation to support program services.
- Fully implemented digital learning in all grades by 2018.
- Universal broadband access for all students in the division by 2020.
- Annual reports to the board indicating the strength of the candidate pool from which we are hiring.
- Annual reports to the board outlining retention rate of instructional staff.

Glossary of Key Terms

Goal: Our major area of focus for the Horizon 2020 strategic plan. This goal is fixed and remains a part of the plan through 2020.

Objectives: These identify our strategic, long term. Objectives are a fixed part of the Horizon 2020 strategic plan and remain a part of the plan through 2020.

Priorities/Targets: These are directly tied to one or more of our objectives and provide indicators that can be measured to provide indications of the progress we are making toward meeting our goal as a division.

Baseline Data: The current levels of performance for ACPS in the identified area.

Key Metric: The single most relevant measure of progress toward the stated priority. This is oftentimes a long-term goal that will span the course of multiple years.

Rationale: An explanation of why this is a necessary priority and how it is connected to our overarching goal.

Annual Formative Indicators: The annual measures that will indicate our progress toward this priority.