

# 2017-2019 Strategic Priorities

## Introduction and Background

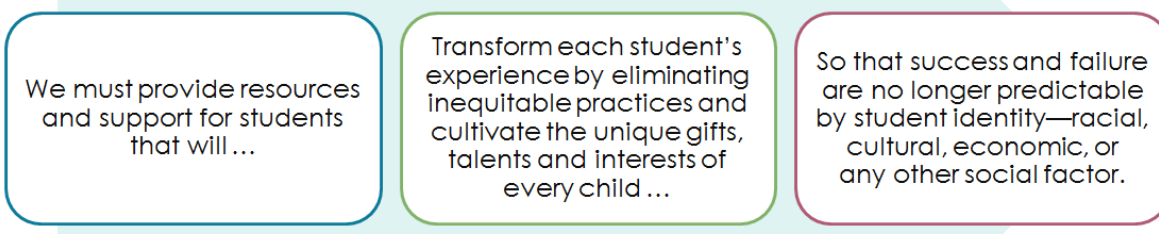
In 2013, Albemarle County Public Schools developed and adopted Horizon 2020, the school division seven-year strategic plan. The plan identified one student-centered goal that would become the key driver of all division improvement planning and innovation: ***All Albemarle County Public Schools students will graduate having actively mastered the lifelong-learning skills they need to succeed as 21st century learners, workers and citizens.*** To support this goal, the board also identified five strategic objectives that, when operationalized in the division, would ensure that the goal was successfully met. These objectives, ***Engage Every Student, Implement Balanced Assessments, Improve Opportunity & Achievement, Create & Expand Partnerships, and Optimize Resources,*** have been at the core of the work of ACPS since the adoption of the strategic plan.

These board goal and objectives are intentionally broad and are in place for the seven-year duration of the division strategic plan. As a part of the strategic planning process, the board also develops short-term strategic priorities that are in place for a period of two years and are designed to more clearly articulate the immediate areas of focus that will allow us to achieve our long-term goals. As we move closer to the culmination of our strategic plan in 2020, our areas of priority focus have become more precise. In the 2013-2015 biennium, the board identified eleven strategic priorities, this number narrowed to four priorities for the 2015-2017 biennium, and it is suggested that we continue to narrow our strategic focus as we develop our priorities for 2017-2019.

As we develop our priorities, we should look both to the past and to the future. The board has spent significant time over the past several months reviewing our plan progress to date, identifying areas where we have been successful and outlining reasons for the successes that we have seen. We are getting close to achieving our primary goal, but work still lies ahead. The board had significant conversation at their June retreat about how a lack of equity and access for all students seemed to be a final obstacle to overcome as we work toward our goal.

As we consider what a truly equitable experience would look like for children in ACPS, research from the [National Equity Project](#) provides the following framing principles for our work:

- Ensuring equally high outcomes for all participants in the ACPS educational system; removing the predictability of success or failures that currently correlates with any social or cultural factor.
- Interrupting inequitable practices, examining biases, and creating inclusive multicultural school environments for adults and children.
- Discovering and cultivating the unique gifts, talents and interests that every human possesses.



We must provide resources and support for students that will...

Transform each student's experience by eliminating inequitable practices and cultivate the unique gifts, talents and interests of every child ...

So that success and failure are no longer predictable by student identity—racial, cultural, economic, or any other social factor.

At the retreat in June, the board discussed several themes related to equity and access. Board members examined those themes and provided feedback on which would be most valuable for the division to pursue as we developed our strategic priority for the next biennium. The themes that rose to the top of the list were:

- Create a culture of high expectations for all students
- Identify and remove practices that perpetuate the achievement gap
- Ensure that students identify and develop their personal interests while in school

This work has led to the development of a proposed strategic priority for 2017-2019.

### **Proposed Strategic Priority**

All students will pursue their personal interests in a culture of high expectations for all so that student success is no longer predictable by student race or any other cultural, economic or social factor. Keys to accomplishing this goal include removing practices that perpetuate the achievement gap, creating and maintaining a culture of high expectations for all, and ensuring all students identify personal interests and have opportunities to deepen those interests while in school.

### **Key Strategies**

Once the Board establishes our strategic priority, central staff develop key strategies that they feel will drive this work forward. Two key strategies have emerged that will help us to achieve our goal.

### **ACPS Equity and Access Initiative**

The [Equity and Access Initiative](#) was developed and approved by the board in the 2016-2017 school year and is currently being implemented. The initiative is a multi-tiered approach to closing the equity and opportunity gap and uses the [ACPS equity dashboard](#) as one key indicator of our progress. Multiple strategies contained within the program are either in place or

are being developed which include a micro-credentialing professional development program, a pilot Social, Emotional, Academic Development (SEAD) team in our urban ring elementary schools, a division-level SEAD oversight team, a student discipline tracking for school-wide behavior management and a newly implemented student achievement management system.

## **High School 2022**

In August of 2016, the Board charged central staff to develop a program to reimagine the high school experience for Albemarle County students to shift our emphasis away from a heavy reliance on content knowledge to a more balanced approach that showed how we value workplace skills, career exploration, community engagement and civic responsibility, while also ensuring equity of access to all. We were also asked also to imagine how a re-envisioned high school program might also work to alleviate overcrowding in our schools. In early 2017 the Board accepted the theoretical framework detailed in the [High School 2022 Program Guide](#).

High School 2022 is a focused, four-year effort to guarantee meaningful and relevant high school experiences that best serve the needs and engage the interests of every student. An extension of innovative programs developed by our teachers and embraced by our students, High School 2022 empowers students to identify, develop and pursue their interests. Through High School 2022, we aim to expand and ensure access to opportunities that will enrich not only our students' education, but their lives. Rather than causing our students to adapt to existing high school structures, we aspire for our programming to respond to the unique needs of each individual student. Our goal is to optimize choice for all students, and ultimately, to afford them the highest potential for success after high school.

Four principles guide this work:

- Ensure equitable access and opportunity for all students.
- Use fair and meaningful assessments.
- Implement flexible scheduling to support student-centered learning.
- Encourage students to explore their interests and passions for course credit.

Implementation plans are currently underway to launch this program with our entering ninth grade class in the 2018-2019 school year.

## **Potential Metrics**

Both of these strategies will serve to focus our work around the three key themes identified by the Board. Potential metrics for the themes identified by the board are listed below.

### **Create a culture of high expectations for all**

- Develop a baseline indicator and growth targets for division levels of collective efficacy
- Develop a baseline indicator and growth targets for division alignment of assessments with the expectations of the Framework for Quality Learning using the [division alignment rubric](#).
- Identify the elements of Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) that are of the highest value to the division; create or adopt an assessment to identify baseline levels of SEL and targets for growth. Some SEL measures are already outlined for us in our Lifelong Learner Competencies including:
  - Demonstrate ethical behavior and respect for diversity

- Participate fully in civic life and act on democratic ideals
  - Apply strategies to monitor and evaluate one's own work
- Implement CWRA+ testing for all ninth and eleventh grade students as a part of HS2022. Use results as formative assessments.

**Identify and remove practices that perpetuate the opportunity gap**

- Number of school board policies enhanced through equity review
- Equity dashboard items will show decreased opportunity gaps for students
- Set a growth target for the number of teachers earning SEAD micro credentials
- Set a growth target for the number of families who gain access to our network in their homes

**Ensure that students identify personal interests and have opportunities to deepen those interests while in school**

- Naviance data
- Freshman seminar feedback
- Drop in chronic absenteeism
- Student interest survey data
- Number of students participating in work-based learning/demographics of students participating in work-based learning
- Measure baseline extracurricular participation of high school students and set targets for growth