

Strategic Priorities Brief
September 12, 2019

Context

The Division's Strategic Priorities provide the target toward which our collective effort and resources should be aimed in order to realize our goal. Strategic priorities are analyzed and revised every biennium in order to make any necessary adjustments to the work that is being done in the division to meet our objectives and our goal. The adopted strategic priorities for 2017-2019 were as follows:

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

The Sunset of Horizon 2020

The Horizon 2020 Strategic Plan will be revised beginning in the spring of 2020. As a result the Board chose not to create new priorities, but rather to smarten the current priorities with some short-term outcomes aimed toward equity and excellence. Facilitated by Dr. McLaughlin, the Board brainstormed and strengthened priorities at their retreat and professional development session during the summer of 2019.

In working on the priorities, the School Board examined both to the past and to the future, incorporating reports from the *Equity Committee* and the Board's newly, student-developed Anti-Racism policy as resources. They had and are continuing to have significant conversations about how a lack of equity and access for all students seems to be a final obstacle to overcome as we work toward our 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.

Focus on Equity

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.

Consensus on Priorities for 2019-20

At the retreat in June and again during a professional development session in July, the board discussed several ways to strengthen the current priorities. The Board reached consensus to essentially attach a strategy or two to each priority to make it measurable and monitorable. Here are the current priorities as developed for the 2019-20 school year:

- Identify and remove practices that perpetuate the achievement gap.
 - By December 1, identify practices that have demonstrated elimination of the achievement gap
 - By Sept. 30, staff will have evaluated and presented to the board the equity dashboard and present target achievement goals.

- Create a culture of high expectations for all.
 - By September 30, create a definition of high expectations or revise/strike the priority.

- Maximize opportunities for students at all levels to identify and develop personal interests.
 - Development of a student interest survey(s) for students in all levels by September 30 for presentation, input and approval from the Board.

Next Steps

Once the ACPS School Board votes to approve these three priorities, staff will develop a logic model for each, communicate to the leadership team, garner resources, and begin activities as outlined in each priority. Staff will provide three, quarterly progress reports as well as a final report on the outcomes of the priorities at the June 2020 Board retreat.