

## Education

On September 9, 2005, the Board identified the following education-related strategic priority to be included in the County's FY 07 – FY 10 Strategic Plan:

*"Commit to having an education system that is among the best in the state/nation"*

### **Background**

The County's (local government) FY 03/04 -05/06 Strategic Plan includes the following life-long learning goals:

1. Create accessible opportunities for everyone to learn, ensuring educational services meet the needs of the community's changing demographics
2. Meet the teaching and learning needs of all citizens along an appropriate continuum of ages and stages of development
3. Ensure the educational system meets the workforce preparation needs of current and future employees and employers
4. Position the County as a recognized leader in educational excellence

The County's life long learning efforts have been conducted in coordination with staff from the School Division.

In fall 2004, the school system initiated work on its own strategic plan. The school system conducted a comprehensive environmental scan analyzing data concerning school reform efforts, student performance and achievement, state of the economy and Albemarle and Virginia demographics. The purpose of the school division's work is "to position the County's school system to meet the challenges that students, families, teachers, staff and our diverse communities face over the next 3 to 5 years." The school system's five year Strategic Plan goals are to:

1. Prepare all students to succeed as members of a global community and in a global economy
2. Eliminate the achievement gap
3. Recruit, retain and develop a diverse cadre of the highest quality teaching personnel, staff and administrators
4. Achieve recognition as a world class educational system
5. Establish efficient systems for development, allocation, and alignment of resources to support the Division's vision, mission, and goals

The School Division envisions its role as an active partner with businesses, government, schools and youth, and as a community facilitator to identify issues and act collectively with all partners. The Division's adopted Strategic Plan for 2005-2009 provides a framework to focus their energy, ensures that all staff members are working toward the same goals and provides a way for the Division to assess and adjust their direction in response to new information – in order for them to best prepare students for their future.

### **Current Situation:**

The School Division has put in place an active strategic planning system. The School Board and School Division leadership provide focus for community planning, organization, engagement and services. A twenty (20) member Strategic Plan Steering Team consisting of school administrators, community members, and teachers supports Strategic Planning review and community input. The Division leadership monitors strategic planning actions with a real-time management process which provides an opportunity for immediate review and quarterly in-progress reporting.

The School Division has strategically invested in learning innovations and acts as an intermediary so the community can collectively produce graduates who will be competent knowledge workers. The school system is working to build stronger alliances with the County to achieve these objectives. For

example, the School Division staff and the Department of Social Services staff have already begun working together to work to eliminate the achievement gap through the Bright Stars Program, the Early Home Visiting Program, and the Family Support Program. They are also combining their efforts to jointly address workforce issues. The School System is taking the necessary actions to provide students a world-class education to be realized in June 2009.

**Issues identified by the School Division:**

1. Diversifying community
2. Accessibility to learning opportunities:
  - eliminate achievement gaps and ensure that all students graduate;
  - improve students' ability to apply knowledge and skills in the context of solving real-life problems of the careers which they will enter;
  - implement consistent application of best practice instruction and assessment;
3. Enhance and extend professional development opportunities.
4. Maintain the Division's market competitiveness for employee compensation.
5. Keep pace with increased operational and growth costs.
6. Prepare all students to enter a global community and economy in which they will work, live, compete, and collaborate with knowledge workers across the globe.
7. Provide the infrastructure needed to meet the service demands of students, staff and the larger school community.
8. Ensure communications and relationships with parents and the public represent 21st century citizens' expectations for interconnectivity and transparency.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the local government continue to cooperate with the School Division and support their strategic planning efforts such that achievement of school system's goals achieves both the School Division and County's strategic goals.

**Proposed Objective to be included in the County's FY 07 – FY 10 Strategic Plan:**

*By June 2009, assist the School Division in achieving recognition as a "world class educational system" by increasing collaborative efforts.*

Specific "strategies" will be developed in coordination with the School Division leadership and should include increasing our efforts to ensure Albemarle County children enter the school system ready to learn.

**Potential Outcome measures:**

The School Division defines "world class" as a high level of competitive performance defined by benchmarking against best practices. The school division's outcome would be met when they receive an external, benchmarked, recognition of "world class."

For consistency, the measures of success for this objective could mirror the one established by the school system in their Strategic Plan.

As an alternative, the measure of success could be in regard to the County's collaboration efforts.