



ANNA JULIA COOPER

SCHOOL

2124 North 29th Street, Richmond, VA 23223
(804) 822-6610 ● ajcschool.org

faith • knowledge • pride

October 5, 2022

Board of Directors

Gussie Bannard
Lauren Brown
Betsy Fauntleroy
Rae Cousins
Shelton Horsley
Jill Hunter, *Chair*
Chuck Kleindienst
Maggie McGeorge
Tanisha Moyer, *Chair of
Parents' Association*
John Pullen
Garrett Sawyer
Mo Shumate
Meg Walker
Mike Walker
Elizabeth Wallace
Fleet Wallace
Brent Winn

Wesley Wright, *Emeritus*
John Stanchina, *Emeritus*

Michael Maruca
Head of School



To Whom It May Concern:

It has been another eventful year at AJC—perhaps even more so than usual. At the time of this report, we are operating a K-8 school with a total of 178 students. We began with 25 students a little over 13 years ago. In addition, we continue to stay in touch with and support a large majority of our now 250+ graduates. Years run together, and so some highlights listed below may have been reported and/or occurred in part during the '20-'21 school year, but here are the most notable:

- The completion of our new Middle School and Gymnasium Building along with significant renovation and upgrades in our old building, now our Lower School
- Occupation of the new building just prior to Thanksgiving of this past year
- Completion of our \$16MM capital campaign. \$8MM is dedicated toward construction; \$3MM as a reserve for the annual budget which will grow significantly during this and the coming several years; and \$5MM toward an Endowment. We have collected nearly \$11MM of the campaign and the remaining \$5MM will be paid via pledges in the coming four years.
- Opening of a Kindergarten and First Grade this July for summer school.
- For the 6th or 7th year in a row we are forward-funded as the school year has begun.
- Like so many schools, events and activities have ramped back up as Covid has—mostly!—receded to the background.
- Expenses have gone up significantly in the past year as we now occupy two buildings with two kitchens and have increased staffing and other expenses to keep up with the growth of the School, e.g. aides in Lower School classrooms, more teachers as we add more grades, more development support staff, added maintenance staffing to care for two buildings and our not insignificant outdoor grounds, increased utility costs, etc.
- We did a revision of our mission statement of which I am very proud. The process was a lengthy one, however I believe we found the right words. (See attached.)

In general, it is safe to say that the School is thriving. We are growing, students are making great progress, donors and volunteers continue to support us, and those who come into the building continue to experience that special sense that makes AJC the 'community of affection' that it is. Having said that, and as I like to note in any communication of this sort, the work remains as difficult as it is moving. Because of the families with whom we are working, there are always more-than-significant challenges because so many face limits with their own resources, e.g. rent, cars, food, housing instability, and so on. Trauma, while it's become an over-used word, is part and parcel of our kids' lives. We are also seeing first hand the collateral damage of so many of our new students having missed school during Covid.

I want to note here that in general our work as a school feels more challenging to almost all of us than ever before. I have heard this from colleagues in other schools regardless of the population they are serving. There seems to be a desire to 'go back' to an earlier time, however we are all learning that we cannot go back, much as we would like to. We are all feeling the aftershocks of Covid and it seems as though schools are a peculiar locus for challenges which society at large is dealing with and confronting. I want to note that reality here, however imperfectly my words capture it, and recognize the changed times we live in.

To end on a positive note, we continue to be a place where the Christian faith is very much alive, moments of joy are commonplace, and the value of what we are doing is very clear and very consoling for those who are part of the work of AJC. We are grateful to be part of the same struggle as our namesake. Our focus remains to make the kind of progress and create the kind of community here each day which is commensurate with the faith and support which so many have and continue to put in us.

Sincerely,

Michael Maruca
Head of School

The mission of Anna Julia Cooper School is to love, educate, and uplift its students and graduates so that they may realize their God-given gifts.

*

*

*

Our way of proceeding:

- We provide full-tuition scholarships to K-8th grade students with limited financial resources who reside primarily in Richmond's East End.
- We aspire to be a School that mutually benefits our students and those who provide the human and financial resources to make it possible.
- We strive to be a place where people find and experience joy
- We are faith-based, believing that Jesus is the fullest expression of God's love for us.
- We are in it for the long haul, supporting students as they transition to high school and pursue their own paths into adulthood.
- We value all staff, parents, volunteers and donors as integral to our success as a School and a community of affection.
- We embrace the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of our namesake in this challenging but life-changing work.