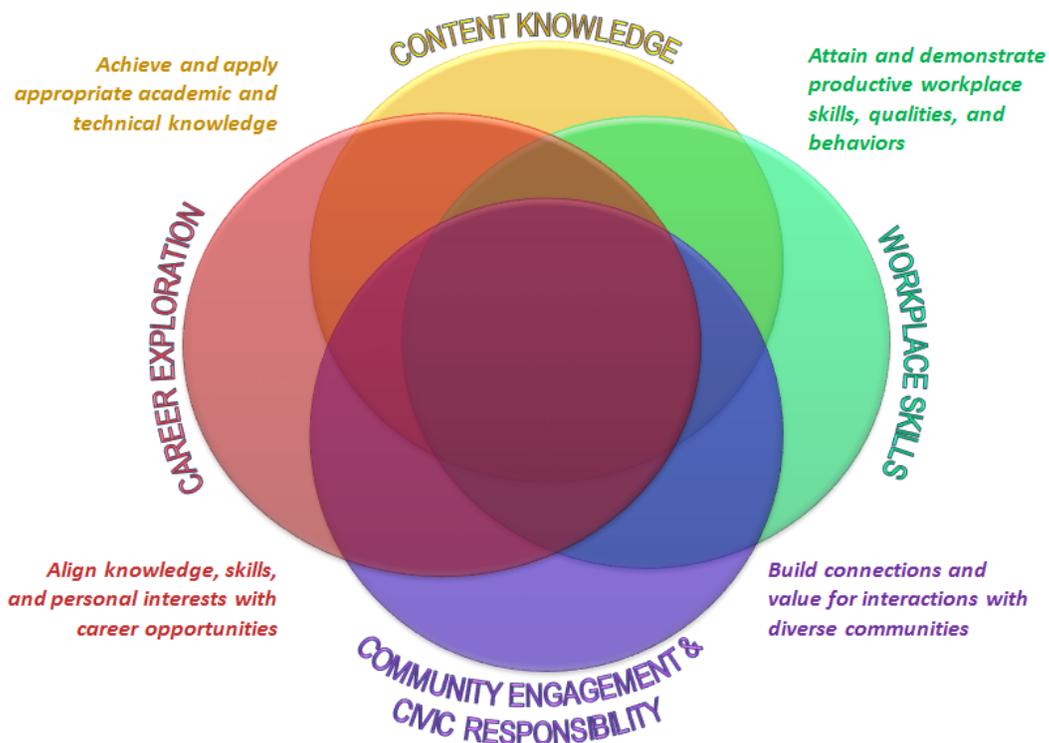# Albemarle County Public Schools High School Program Guide Class of 2022

I. Introduction

Profile of an Albemarle Graduate

As our world and our economy continue to rapidly evolve, it is more important than ever that we ensure all graduates from Albemarle County Public Schools are "life-ready"--that they have developed the skills and competencies they need to be prepared for any path they choose to pursue upon leaving our school system. Traditionally, schools have had a strong emphasis on students' development of content knowledge and have assigned less importance to competencies such as workplace skills, career exploration, community engagement and civic responsibility. Both the Commonwealth of Virginia and Albemarle County Public Schools are striving to more equally distribute the emphasis on all of these areas, with a goal that all are given equal measure in our system.

Profile of a Virginia Graduate
In Virginia, the Life Ready Individual Will, During His or Her K-12 Educational Experience:

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE — Achieve and apply appropriate academic and technical knowledge

WORKPLACE SKILLS — Attain and demonstrate productive workplace skills, qualities, and behaviors

CAREER EXPLORATION — Align knowledge, skills, and personal interests with career opportunities

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY — Build connections and value for interactions with diverse communities

Our commitment to this work has resulted in the development of the Profile of an Albemarle Graduate.

Albemarle County Public Schools graduates will be:

- Responsible self-advocates who demonstrate ownership of and engagement in their future
- Effective communicators and collaborators who can work well within diverse communities
- Academically accomplished as demonstrated through a well-rounded instructional program inside and outside of "core" academics
- Responsible citizens who value and build connections within diverse communities
- Critical thinkers who demonstrate an ability to analyze, assess and reconstruct issues related to any subject, content or problem
- Creative problem solvers who have experience solving authentic, community-based problems

A purpose of this program guide is to help to ensure parity of programming and opportunity among all students, regardless of which school they attend, their demographic background, or any other factor. This guide outlines our key programs, beliefs, and operating principles that are critical to all students meeting the profile outlined above.

School practices and decision making in Albemarle County Public Schools are rooted in the ideals presented Horizon 2020, our school division Strategic Plan. Horizon 2020 incorporates our district mission, vision, and core values; our one student-centered goal; our five strategic objectives; and our 12 lifelong-learner competencies.

Mission
The core purpose of Albemarle County Public Schools is to establish a community of learners and learning, through relationships, relevance, and rigor, one student at a time.

Vision
All learners believe in their power to embrace learning, to excel, and to own their future.

Core Values

Excellence
We believe in meaningful learning that stretches people to the frontiers and boundaries of their abilities.

Young People
We believe young people deserve the best we have to offer. Each individual child is capable and has the right to safety, mutual respect, and learning.

Community
We believe in our collective responsibility to work together in a cooperative effort to achieve common goals by building communities of practice, establishing a high quality learning community, and listening to the community.

Respect
We believe in treating all individuals with honor and dignity.

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.

Strategic Objectives

- Engage Every Student
- Implement Balanced Assessments
- Improve Opportunity & Achievement
- Create & Expand Partnerships
- Optimize Resources

Lifelong-Learner Competencies

- Plan and conduct research.
- Gather, organize and analyze data; evaluate processes and products; and draw conclusions.
- Think analytically, critically and creatively to pursue new ideas, acquire new knowledge, and make decisions.
- Understand and apply principles of logic and reasoning; develop, evaluate and defend arguments.
- Seek, recognize and understand systems, patterns, themes and interactions.
- Apply and adapt a variety of appropriate strategies to solve new and increasingly complex problems.
- Acquire and use precise language to clearly communicate ideas, knowledge and processes.
- Explore and express ideas and opinions using multiple media, the arts, and technology.
- Demonstrate ethical behavior and respect for diversity through daily actions and decision making.
- Participate fully in civic life and act on democratic ideals within the context of community and global interdependence.
- Understand and follow a physically active lifestyle that promotes good health and wellness.
- Apply habits of mind and metacognitive strategies to plan, monitor and evaluate one's own work.

II. Graduate Profile

Albemarle County Profile of a Graduate

Albemarle County graduates will be responsible self-advocates who demonstrate ownership and engagement of their future.

Lifelong-Learner Competencies	Apply habits of mind and metacognitive strategies to plan, monitor and evaluate one's own work.
	Understand and follow a physically active lifestyle that promotes good health and wellness.
Operating Principles	We will encourage all students to develop and pursue passion-based course credits.
Instructional Programs	Grade-level Themes
	Credit Options/Alternative to Credits
	Culminating Senior Experiences
	Student Ownership
	Program Evaluations/Assessment

Albemarle County graduates will be effective communicators and collaborators who can work well within a diverse community.

Lifelong-Learner Competencies	Acquire and use precise language to clearly communicate ideas, knowledge and processes.
	Explore and express ideas and opinions using multiple media, the arts, and technology.
Operating Principles	We will ensure equity and opportunity for all students.
Instructional Programs	Grade-level Themes
	Authentic Problem-Solving Challenges
	Credit Options/Alternative to Credits
	Culminating Senior Experiences
	Student Ownership
	Program Evaluations/Assessment

Albemarle County graduates will be academically accomplished as demonstrated through a well-rounded instructional program inside and outside of "core" academics.

Lifelong-Learner Competencies	Plan and conduct research.
	Gather, organize and analyze data; evaluate processes and products; and draw conclusions.
Operating Principles	We will develop equitable grading practices that clearly identify student achievement of content knowledge, processes, and skills. The primary purpose of the grading system is for educators to clearly, accurately, consistently, and fairly communicate learning progress and achievement.
	We will implement scheduling practices and opportunities to better allow for the creation of student-centered learning environments. Flexible learning opportunities will be encouraged to allow maximum flexibility for students to experience a wide-variety of opportunities and that reflect opportunities for students to utilize their strengths as learners.
Instructional Programs	Authentic Problem-Solving Challenges
	Interdisciplinary Instruction
	Credit Options/Alternative to Credits
	Culminating Senior Experiences
	Student Ownership
	Program Evaluations/Assessment

Albemarle County graduates will be responsible citizens who value and build connections within diverse communities.

Lifelong-Learner Competencies	Demonstrate ethical behavior and respect for diversity through daily actions and decision making.
	Participate fully in civic life and act on democratic ideals within the context of community and global interdependence.
Operating Principles	We will encourage all students to develop and pursue passion-based course credits.
	We will implement scheduling practices that allow students maximum flexibility to experience a wide-variety of opportunities.
	We will ensure equity and opportunity for all students.
	We will implement scheduling practices and opportunities to better allow for the creation of student-centered learning environments. Flexible learning opportunities will be encouraged to allow maximum flexibility for students to experience a wide-variety of opportunities and that reflect opportunities for students to utilize their strengths as learners.
Instructional Programs	Grade-level Themes
	Authentic Problem-Solving Challenges
	Interdisciplinary Instruction
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Albemarle County graduates will be critical thinkers who demonstrate an ability to analyze, assess and reconstruct issues related to any subject, content or problem.

Lifelong-Learner Competencies	Think analytically, critically and creatively to pursue new ideas, acquire new knowledge, and make decisions.
	Understand and apply principles of logic and reasoning; develop, evaluate and defend arguments.
Operating Principles	We will encourage all students to develop and pursue passion-based course credits.
	We will implement scheduling practices and opportunities to better allow for the creation of student-centered learning environments. Flexible learning opportunities will be encouraged to allow maximum flexibility for students to experience a wide-variety of opportunities and that reflect opportunities for students to utilize their strengths as learners.
Instructional Programs	Grade-level Themes
	Authentic Problem-Solving Challenges
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	Credit Options/Alternative to Credits
	Culminating Senior Experiences
	Student Ownership
	Program Evaluations/Assessment

Albemarle County graduates will be creative problem solvers who have experience solving authentic, community-based problems.

Lifelong-Learner Competencies	Seek, recognize and understand systems, patterns, themes and interactions.
	Apply and adapt a variety of appropriate strategies to solve new and increasingly complex problems.
Operating Principles	We will encourage all students to develop and pursue passion-based course credits.
	We will implement scheduling practices and opportunities to better allow for the creation of student-centered learning environments. Flexible learning opportunities will be encouraged to allow maximum flexibility for students to experience a wide-variety of opportunities and that reflect opportunities for students to utilize their strengths as learners.
Instructional Programs	Grade-level Themes
	Authentic Problem-Solving Challenges
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III. Operating Principles

The guiding philosophies behind the programs in our high schools are outlined in our operating principles. These principles are meant to be guiding philosophies that all stakeholders adhere to as we plan and implement instructional programs for our students. They are designed to promote student success, while also helping to ensure equity and parity for all students in the division regardless of which school they attend or to which teacher they are assigned.

I. **We will encourage all students to develop and pursue passion-based course credits.**
    A. Student engagement and ownership increase directly with student interest. Possible programs/structures that would promote this may include:
        1. Grade-level seminar courses
        2. Credits earned outside of traditional school day
        3. Pass/Fail options for courses
        4. Community-based learning opportunities
            a. Internship/Mentorship
            b. Job shadowing
            c. Work-based learning
        5. Student designed courses
        6. Student designed pathways
        7. Capstone projects
        8. Independent studies
    B. Instructional resources should reflect our emphasis on balanced experiences for students which allow them to engage in the application of concepts and provide an opportunity for evaluation.

II. **We will implement scheduling practices and opportunities to better allow for the creation of student-centered learning environments. Flexible learning opportunities will be encouraged to allow students a wide-variety of experiences to utilize their strengths as learners.**
   A. Learning extends beyond the classroom so opportunities to earn credit outside of the classroom must also exist. Many students need time flexibility to address family or personal needs. Some examples of this may include:
      1. Earning credit for work experience
      2. Mentorships/Internships
      3. Capstone projects
      4. Earning credit for extracurricular experiences
      5. Blended learning opportunities
   B. Students learn in different ways and therefore need options regarding their learning environments. Flexible scheduling in school affords more student and teacher choice to pursue special interests.
      1. ¼ and/or ½ credit exploratory elective experiences
      2. Rethinking traditional school hours for some students

III. **We will develop equitable grading practices that clearly identify student achievement of content knowledge, processes, and skills. The primary purpose of the grading system is for educators to clearly, accurately, consistently, and fairly communicate learning progress and achievement.**
   A. Similar content areas should operate under a shared understanding of grading systems and processes, striving to achieve a level of fairness between classes.
   B. Academic progress and achievement will be evaluated separately from work habits, character traits and behaviors.
   C. Students will be evaluated with diverse assessment practices.

IV. **We will ensure equity of opportunity for all students.**
   A. Students come from diverse backgrounds, therefore ACPS needs to ensure that all students are afforded equitable opportunities to reach their full potential. Programs and structures that may help to promote this could include:
      1. Grade level seminars
      2. Yearly thematic areas of focus
      3. Student created courses/Independent studies
      4. Integrated, interdisciplinary instruction
      5. Peer tutors
      6. Community mentoring
      7. AVID
      8. Equitable opportunity to access programming and pathways
      9. Increased Career and Technical Education opportunities

IV. Big Ideas

Our "Big Ideas" are the unique programs that will be available to all students that will help to ensure a high school experience that develops students into the well-rounded, fully-prepared graduates we hope they will become. This section of the program guide gives broad outlines of both the types of

experiences we will provide for our students and some potential ways in which we will measure their progress toward meeting the expectations outlined in the Profile of an Albemarle Graduate.

I. **Grade-level Themes**
   A. Overview: Each grade level in a student's four year high school experience will have a different, progressive area of focus that places a deliberate emphasis on competencies that are crucial to the development of productive citizens and scholars. Students will learn how to get to know themselves as students and community members, how to build skills needed to work within groups, how to identify and solve community problems, and will be given opportunities to follow their passions and plan for their futures. These courses will also help students develop and analyze electronic portfolios across all four of their high school years. Suggested themes include:
      1. Self-discovery and foundations—year one
      2. Collaboration and discovery—year two
      3. Community and connections—year three
      4. Passion and transition—year four
   B. Potential means of implementation
      1. Grade-level seminar courses
      2. Integration of themes across subject areas
      3. English/Social Studies interdisciplinary teams

II. **Authentic Problem-Solving Challenges**
   A. Overview: To develop the skills outlined in the Profile of an Albemarle Graduate, students will engage in developing creative solutions to authentic community problems. The high school program guide will ensure a collection of guaranteed experiences that build upon each other and incorporate problem-based and project-based learning with a focus on community engagement and civic responsibility.
   B. Potential means of implementation:
      1. Grade level seminar courses
      2. English/Social Studies interdisciplinary teams
      3. [Project pool](#)
      4. Senior Capstone
      5. Work-based learning; Co-op projects

III. **Interdisciplinary Instruction**
   A. Overview: Outside of a traditional school setting, learning rarely takes place in areas that are isolated by a single subject matter. When students have an opportunity to break down the barriers between different subjects and see how all of the material we teach is interconnected, the learning experience becomes one that is more long-lasting and authentic. Creating opportunities for interdisciplinary instruction in which students see the connections in what they are learning will be a highlight of the High School 2022 experience.
   B. Potential means of implementation:
      1. TEAM approach
      2. Co-taught, interdisciplinary classes
      3. P-based learning activities
      4. High school academies
      5. Structured academic pathways (i.e. Arts and Letters)
      6. [Project pool](#)

IV. Credit Options/Alternative to Credits

A. Overview: Students who take ownership of their learning experiences are more likely to develop the skills outlined in the Profile of an Albemarle Graduate. All high school students will have an opportunity to develop their own course work to pursue an area of study that taps into their natural curiosities and passions. The goal of this program is to provide students and educators with increased flexibility to earn credits, and to allow students to earn credit for real-world experiences they have outside of the school walls.

B. Possible non-traditional options for students to earn credits to include:
   1. Pass/Fail options
   2. Partial credit options to include ½ or ¼ credits
   3. Student or teacher designed, passion-based course
   4. Competency-based standards (testing out of a class)
   5. Alternative means to credits (athletics, community service, etc.)
   6. Industry certification
   7. Proposed new policy IKFD--Pathways for Attaining Standard Units of Credit; being presented to the board in winter/spring 2017

V. Culminating Senior Experiences

A. Overview: The traditional American high school experience often ends without a culminating experience that allows students to showcase the talents they have developed over thirteen years of schooling while also thinking about how their work as a K-12 student will help them with their future plans. The culminating senior experience will incorporate many elements, including student choice, mastery of division lifelong learner competencies, personal reflection on growth as a student and a citizen, and their future goals. The purpose is to provide students an opportunity to demonstrate their readiness to leave high school and move on to the next stage of their lives as learners.

B. Potential means of implementation:
   1. Capstone project
   2. Portfolio defense
   3. Naviance
   4. Student showcase
   5. Internship

VI. Student Ownership

A. Overview: Our school system itself has the potential to provide myriad opportunities for students to take over functions traditionally assigned to adults in our buildings. Student ownership of authentic, impactful tasks and programs has the potential to build a higher level of students' sense of belonging and commitment to the school, provide students with the development of life skills in line with the Profile of a Graduate, and provide more student-focused ways of doing business within a school.

B. Potential means of implementation:
   1. Librarian assistant
   2. Office Assistant
   3. Teaching Assistant
   4. Help Desk Coordinator
   5. Cafeteria Management Assistant
   6. Activities Coordinator Assistant
   7. Peer Support Coordinator

8. Building Management
9. Internships within the school building

VII. Program Evaluations/Assessment

A. Overview: The vision of High School 2022 is for all students to graduate from our schools meeting the criteria outlined in the Profile of an Albemarle Graduate. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of this program, competency-based assessments should be implemented to help us know if both our students and our school division are being successful in meeting this goal. Key questions for program evaluation include: How will we know, institutionally, if we are being successful? When new programs or initiatives are implemented, how will we track the success of those programs?

B. Potential means of implementation:
   1. CWRA--all students beginning of ninth grade/end of eleventh grade
   2. Lifelong Learning Competencies 2.0 - Performance Tasks
   3. Portfolio Assessment: Students will retain and refine work samples across curricula and experiences that are aligned to ACPS Life-Long-Learning Competencies. Side by side with teachers and mentors, students will continuously engage in self-assessment of their work samples and reflect on their role and growth in learning. Portfolio assessment will ideally culminate in tandem with the student's capstone project. **Monticello High School is currently piloting and improving student performance portfolios. We have a team embedded in a Virginia Network Improvement Community (NIC) sponsored by EdLeader 21 developing plans to advance student-led assessment.

V. Sample Pathways

High School Pathfinder: A trail map of experiences for grades 9-12
Click here to view a larger version of this image »
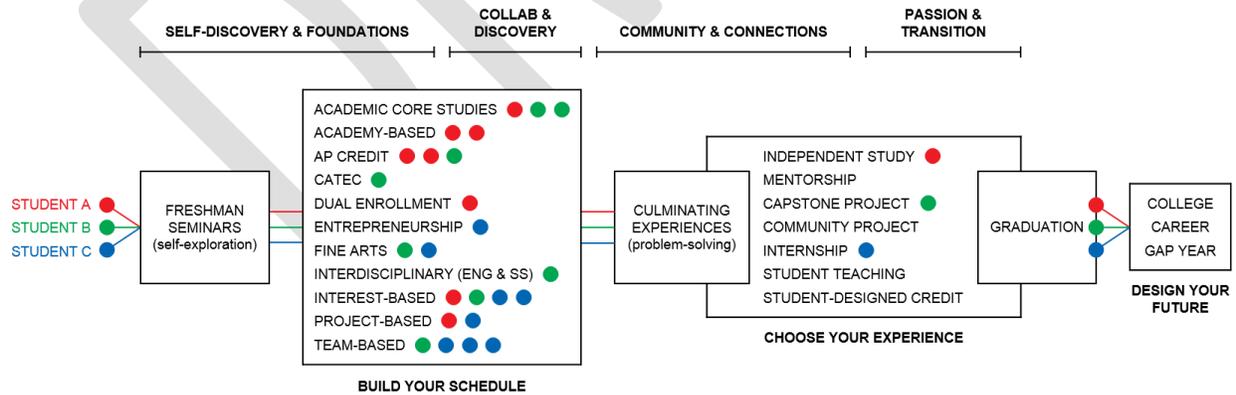
VI. The Ninth Grade Experience

The importance of the ninth grade year on a student's future academic success cannot be underestimated. A 2010 study published in *Education* tells us the following:

Ninth graders have the lowest grade point average, the most missed classes, the majority of failing grades, and more misbehavior referrals than any other high school grade level. The 9th grade also has the highest enrollment rate in high schools, mainly due to the fact that approximately 22% of students repeat 9th-grade classes. This number can be even higher in large urban high schools. While the transition from middle school to high school can represent an important milestone, it can also be a time of loneliness, isolation, and disconnection for some students. This transition period is frequently marked by declining academic performance, increased absences, and increased behavior disturbances. These factors put freshmen more at risk than any other school-aged group. The differences, both academically and socially, between middle school and high school make the transition difficult. The authors contend that it is important to consider what can be done in middle school to better prepare students for new challenges and also important to not drop the ball on students after 9th grade, but to continue support during their remaining high school years.

As we rethink our high schools, developing an engaging, authentic experience for our incoming ninth grade students is a crucial aspect of this work. The ninth grade year should be a time when students embark on a voyage of self-discovery and have authentic learning experiences that help them to understand the value of the work they will be doing in high school. The ninth grade experience for students beginning with the class of 2022 will be enhanced in the following ways:

I. Freshman Seminar

All ninth grade students will be enrolled in a freshman seminar course during their first year of high school. The course will be designed to develop students in a number of ways that help them understand who they are as a learner, a community member, and a friend. The course will be a credit bearing elective course for the students, and will provide all students with a faculty mentor who will help to guide them to success in high school and beyond. Some potential goals of the program may include:

- The building of relationships between the student and a teacher, between the student and other students, and between parents/guardians and the school.
- Providing an adult mentor who can monitor and guide a student's academic and social progress throughout their high school experience
- Developing electronic portfolios and understanding how portfolios can be used by students to assess their academic progress and growth over time
- Using tools such as Naviance to help students discover and develop their interests and talents--to find the gifts every student possesses and help them find a way to build upon those gifts
- Developing the ability to personally reflect on work and experiences as a student
- Building upon the grade level theme of self-discovery and foundations
- Developing self-advocacy skills

Identification of instructional personnel and further development of the program curriculum will take place beginning in the spring of 2017. Key specifications, solidified goals, and program assessment strategies will be developed at that time.

II. Interdisciplinary Instruction

Students are more engaged in their schoolwork when their work is authentic and meaningful. A key strategy in helping students meet the Profile of a Virginia Graduate and the Profile of an Albemarle Graduate is breaking down some of the walls that have traditionally caused subjects to be taught in isolation. To begin that process, we will develop guaranteed interdisciplinary experiences for all ninth grade students. Interdisciplinary instruction allows teachers and students greater opportunities to experience the "Deeper Learning" principles that are so crucial to success in the modern economy.

During a student's ninth grade year, interdisciplinary instruction will take place, at minimum, through a collaborative partnership between ninth grade English teachers and teachers of World Geography and World History I (the two social studies classes typically taken by students in ninth grade). A central planning team will be formed to develop a table of specifications that outline the key elements an interdisciplinary experience must contain. Schools will ensure that all students participate in this experience. This will provide for a flexible structure that allows teachers the opportunity to hold traditional classes as well as combined, co-taught classes that blend together the English and social studies experience.

Identification of instructional personnel and further development of the program curriculum will take place beginning in the spring of 2017. Key specifications, solidified goals, and program assessment strategies will be developed at that time.

III. College Workforce Readiness Assessment

From the CWRA website:

> *CWRA+ (College and Work Readiness Assessment) is a performance-based assessment for learning, assessing, and measuring growth of student critical-thinking, problem-solving, data-literacy, and written-communication skills in middle school and high school.*
>
> *The skills CWRA+ assesses include:*
>
> - *Analysis and Problem Solving*
> - *Writing Effectiveness*
> - *Writing Mechanics*
> - *Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning*
> - *Critical Reading and Evaluation*
> - *Critiquing an Argument*
>
> *The Performance Task approach utilized by CWRA+ situates students in a real-world scenario and gives them a role to play and decision(s) to make. Students are asked to use authentic artifacts and reference documents to demonstrate their proficiency in the skills being assessed.*
>
> *This performance assessment aligns with best practices established for teaching and learning. Rather than simply evaluating student ability to recall facts, CWRA+ assesses student ability to access, structure, and effectively use information. The use of one's knowledge, experience, and skills to solve a problem, make sense of a situation, or discern data as fact or fiction in a novel situation is the goal of learning—and these are the learning outcomes assessed by CWRA+.*

Albemarle County currently uses CWRA+ on a limited basis with a sample group of students. Beginning in 2018-2019 the program will expand to include all students with tests being administered in the first marking period of the ninth grade year and again at the end of the eleventh grade year. Seminar periods will be used for students to receive, interpret and reflect on their results. CWRA+ will help students to find their areas of strength in college/workforce readiness and will also provide a division metric to help gauge the impact of the Profile of a Graduate Program.