

ANNUAL REPORT 22-23



ANNA JULIA COOPER
SCHOOL



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Friends of AJC,

Perhaps the 2022–2023 school year will be most remembered as the year we escaped the gravitational field of COVID — its pivots, mitigations, masks, pods, testing, and anxieties — and resumed our regular orbit around our true center of gravity, our mission to “love, educate, and uplift our students and graduates.”

On the mission front, the best development this year was our first-ever kindergarten and first grade classes. We officially became a K–8 school, and you could see and feel the difference immediately. We’ve known all along that the sooner you start, the less ground needs to be made up and the more rapidly the growth can begin. We saw all of that and then some every day with our own eyes.

The year brought too many special events to recount, though I’ll mention two here. We had several “Read Hard, Play Hard” days when all students read until about 1:00 pm, then played in the gym or outside for the remainder of the day. It was only great. For years, the Head of School has been saying, “If we just read all morning and then played in the afternoon, they’d be writing articles about us.” Write on. In December, we hosted the boys and girls basketball teams from five other schools in our first annual Holiday Hoops tournament. Only great again.

We wanted more parents and families in the building than ever before (a COVID rebound?), and boy, did we succeed. It’s a win every time a parent is welcomed through the door. There was Dudes and Donuts, Moms and Muffins, A Father-Daughter Dance, and Grandparents Day, all firsts in AJC history. We had a packed gym for the Black History Month celebration. Annual events like Poppa Bland’s Fish Fry, the Spring Bash, the 8th grade dance, and year-end celebrations like “Movin’ on Up”

for rising 5th graders and a Final Assembly with the 8th Grade Graduation brought large crowds of parents and families. And the usual 100% participation at our twice-a-year parent conferences.

Graduate Support was busy as always. The number of graduates continues to grow (almost 270 now) and there are almost as many life trajectories as there are graduates. All but one from the 2019 class successfully completed high school, and we have the largest number of students from any class starting college in the Fall. Our oldest grads are 26 and 27; two of them have children in our kindergarten and three of them are on staff at AJC. Maybe one day they’ll take over.

On a tough note, the year also brought a regrettable but dramatic uptick in the presence of weapons and violence in our immediate neighborhood. Weapons are ubiquitous now, their use often fueled by social media and phones. It’s not something we can simply wish away. We can, however, respond with measures that best ensure the safety of the whole school community, and we did just that. The wider School community is grateful we did.

Finally, in our now fourteen-year history, donors continued to believe in us and to bet on us as they always have: generously. Thank you if you are one of those donors reading this.

Part of our Mission Statement reads “We aspire to be a School that mutually benefits our students and those who provide the human and financial resources to make it possible.” I hope in some measure, large or small, that has been your experience as well.

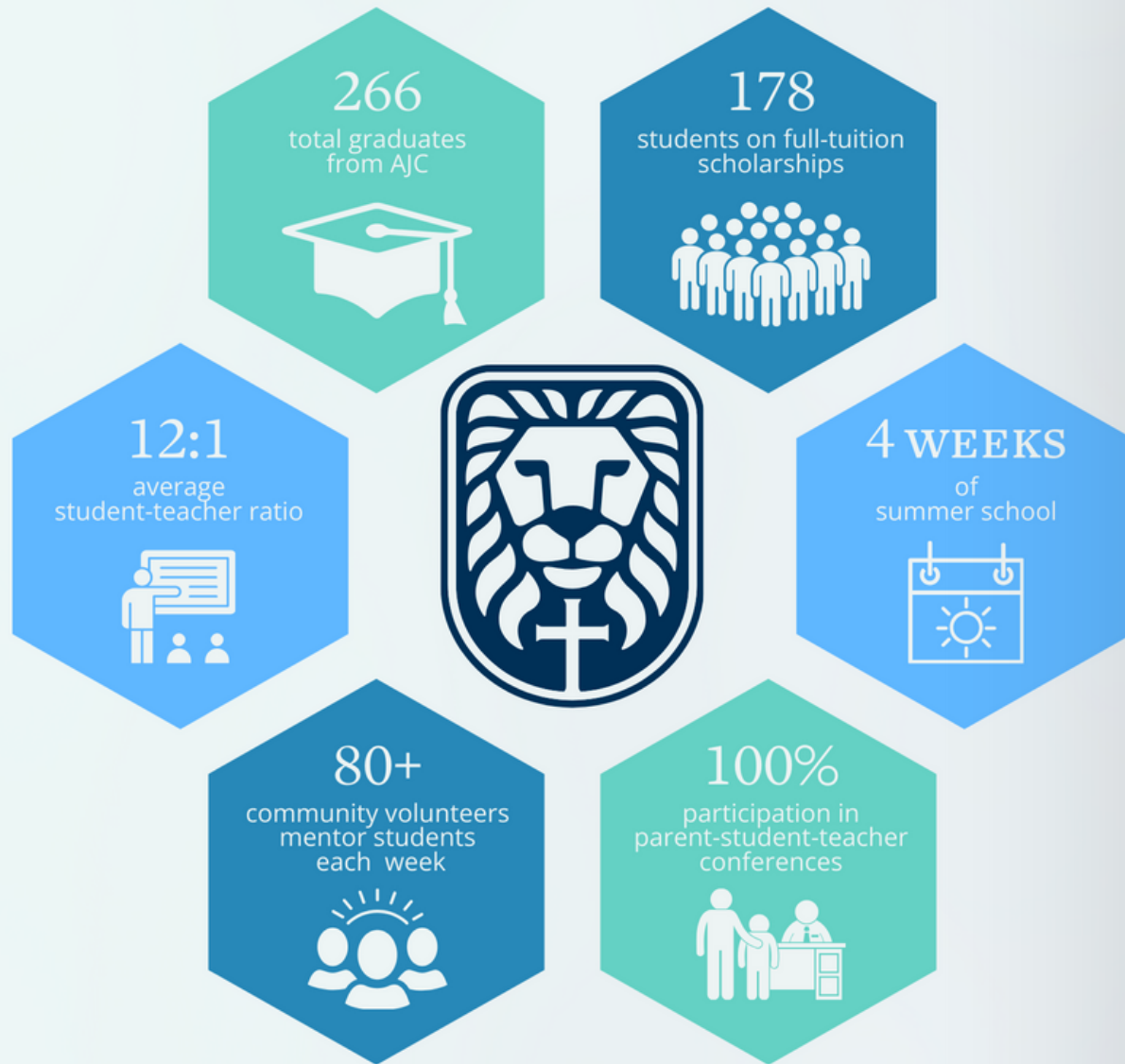
Sincerely,



MICHAEL MARUCA
Head of School



AJC AT A GLANCE



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Increased parent engagement was a schoolwide priority and highlight of the year. Several new opportunities for parent and family involvement made for many precious moments, with each event being well-attended and enjoyed by all.



Moms & Muffins



Dudes & Donuts



Parent-Student-Teacher conferences



Daddy-Daughter Dance

NEW BEGINNINGS

THE ADDITION OF KINDERGARTEN AND 1ST GRADE

We expanded our Lower School this year by welcoming our inaugural Kindergarten and 1st Grade classes. We have already seen amazing results from the opportunity to love, educate, and uplift our students from the very beginning of their academic journey.

Mrs. Robinson uses a Montessori approach in the Kindergarten classroom that encourages each child to move, touch, and manipulate different materials at their own pace. In providing opportunities to follow their interests and choose their own activities, kindergarteners develop their capacity for concentration and engage their emerging powers of reason, imagination, and sociability.

Our 1st Grade teacher, Mrs. Evertson, has also witnessed the benefits of welcoming students to AJC at a younger age. Her classroom provides a safe space for joyful learning and prepares students for success in the years to come.

In Kindergarten and 1st Grade, students gain independence skills that result in self-confidence, purpose, and a sense of responsibility for themselves and their community. These foundational skills will serve our students well throughout their time at AJC and beyond.



NEW TRADITIONS

With new spaces for school-wide events and a growing team of teachers and staff, an infusion of fresh ideas enriched the life of the School this year. Evolving from fresh ideas to “first-annuals,” these events will be marked on the AJC calendar for years to come.

Designed to promote school spirit, “**House Teams**” encouraged teamwork and school pride. Students and staff were assigned to one of four Houses that were based on four of the tenets of our PRIDE pledge: I am Prepared, I show Respect, I model Integrity, I have a Dream, I will Excel. The Teams compete for points through positive behavior. **Read Hard Play Hard** allowed students to become engrossed in a great book in the morning and spend the afternoon at play. **The Greatest Writing Contest Ever** encouraged students to enter their best-written work into a school-wide competition with incredible prizes up for grabs. The first annual **Lower School Movin’ On Up Ceremony** was celebrated on our own stage with a gym full of parents and families cheering on the 4th graders moving up to 5th, and awards given to K-4 students for accomplishments throughout the year.



Students read together during Read Hard, Play Hard



Lower School students enjoyed an afternoon at play



House Team TAYARI: I am PREPARED



House Team HESHIMA: I show RESPECT



House Team NDOTO: I have a DREAM



House Team BORA: I will EXCEL



Winner of The Greatest Writing Contest Ever



Movin’ On Up Ceremony



FINANCIALS

July 1st, 2022 - June 30th, 2023

REVENUE*

DONOR TYPE	AMOUNT
Individuals	\$1,938,947
Foundations	\$685,208
Corporations	\$19,041
Churches/Civic Support	\$111,143
Pandemic Relief Grants & Other Reimbursements	\$628,043
Other **	\$437,141
TOTAL	\$3,819,523

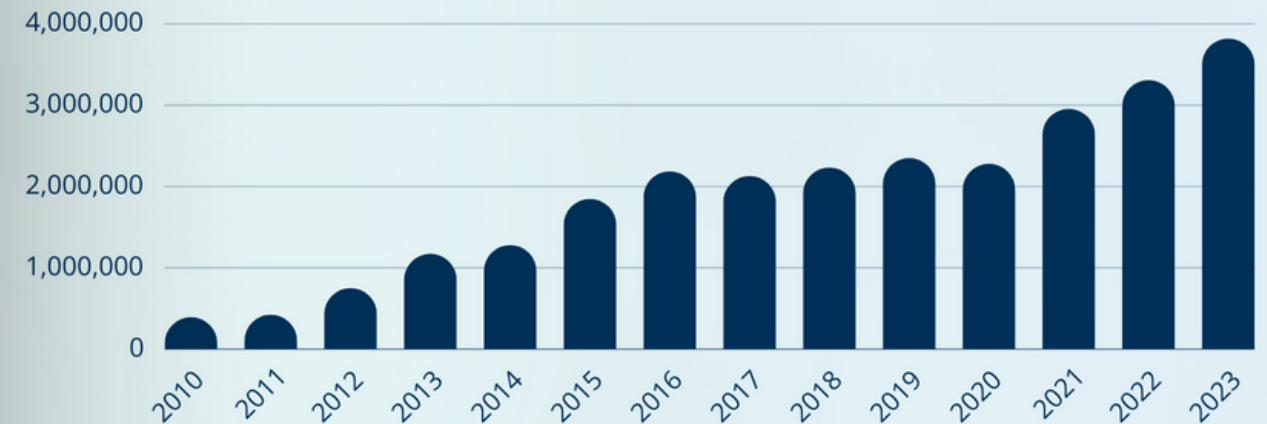
EXPENSES*

CATEGORY	AMOUNT
Program	\$2,732,417
Graduate Support	\$242,634
Management & General	\$560,415
Fundraising	\$284,057
TOTAL	\$3,819,523

* These figures do not include capital expenses, Building Hope campaign pledges or contributions, donated goods/services, a special one-time employee bonus program, or existing restricted endowment funds, all of which are included in our audit and may be found on our website, ajcschool.org.

** Includes \$264,033 from the operational reserve component of the Building Hope Campaign, which was intended to offset annual expense increases due to the expansion.

REVENUE GROWTH



NEW SUPPORT SERVICES

With the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic coming into focus this year, we worked to secure funding to provide more support services than ever before. Serving younger students, many of whom came to AJC having been out of in-person school for nearly two years, we recognized the critical need for academic and social-emotional intervention, speech therapy, and mental health support. Working within the Federal EANS (Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools) Program, we secured funding to provide access to the following resources, right at school:

- **School-Based Trauma Therapist**
 - 24 students received outpatient trauma therapy
- **Behavioral Support Aide**
 - 16 students received daily one-on-one social-emotional support
- **Lower School Classroom Aides**
 - Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades
- **Speech Therapist**
 - 12 students were identified through screening to receive weekly therapy
- **Middle School Academic Interventionist**
 - 12 students received daily academic intervention

Each of these resources has proven to be integral to our mission and will be prioritized in years to come as we work to secure long-term funding for these critical support services.



GRADUATE SUPPORT

As a school, we have always aimed to walk alongside students for as long as they'll let us. Success and setbacks alike, we strive to be a place where kids feel loved - a place they can "come home to" for encouragement or advice.

Lorin Johnson, our Graduate Support Coordinator and former AJC student herself, describes our Graduate Support Program best:

"We follow private school kids, public school kids, kids who move, kids who are parents, kids who go to college. We're there to help them become successful adults. It's really about maintaining a sense of community, love and support. We meet our kids wherever they are."

Our graduate support team begins building relationships with students in their 7th-grade year to start exploring high school options. In 8th grade, students complete a High School Prep curriculum and, under the guidance of Graduate Support, apply to the high schools best suited to their abilities and goals. Many high-achieving students

receive scholarships funded through a combination of the AJC Scholarship Program and private school scholarship programs, allowing them to attend high schools that would otherwise be out of reach. UP RVA, a long-time partner and collaborator, provides extraordinary and much-needed support services to many of the graduates in high school and in college.

Throughout their high school years, students gain valuable experience through Graduate Support's Summer Work Program, in partnership with local companies and non-profits.



Aaleya, AJC '19 and Collegiate School '23, with Greg McCandless, Executive Director of UP RVA

AJC GRAD STATS

High Schools our Alumni attended during the 2022-2023 school year:

- *Christ Church School*
- *Church Hill Academy*
- *Collegiate School*
- *Cristo Rey Richmond*
- *Fork Union Military Academy*
- *St. Catherine's School*
- *St. Christopher's School*
- *Steward School*
- *Trinity Episcopal School*
- *Armstrong High School*
- *Highland Springs High School*
- *John Marshall High school*
- *Matoaca High School*
- *Thomas Jefferson High School*
- *Thomas Dale High School*
- *Petersburg High School*

Colleges our Alumni attended during the 2022-2023 school year:

- *Chowan University*
- *College of William and Mary*
- *Denison University*
- *Eastern Maryland Shore*
- *Emory and Henry*
- *Hampton University*
- *J. Sargent Reynolds Comm. College*
- *James Madison University*
- *Longwood University*
- *Mary Baldwin University*
- *McDaniel College*
- *Mary Washington University*
- *Norfolk State University*
- *Old Dominion University*
- *Point Park University*
- *Randolph-Macon College*
- *University of Maryland Eastern Shore*
- *Virginia Commonwealth University*
- *Virginia State University*



total AJC graduates



of graduates remain in touch with AJC



of grads enroll in area independent schools, many receiving tuition support from AJC



Class of 2023 on-time graduation rate



Middle School Robotics



4th Grade with Minds in Motion



Scouts



1st Grade Cooking Class

ENRICHMENT

An AJC education is about more than academic growth. It has always been about the whole child: social-emotional growth, spiritual growth, and an ever-evolving offering of enrichment opportunities made possible through our many non-profit partnerships. From life skills like learning to swim to art, athletics, summer sleep-away camps, and so much more, students are exposed to a host of activities, giving them the opportunity to discover new talents and interests.



Student Opportunities

- Art
- Biking Club
- Boy Scouts
- Boys and Girls Basketball
- Boys Soccer
- Cheerleading
- Film Club
- Football
- Game Club
- Golf
- LEGO Robotics
- Newspaper Club
- Piano Lessons
- Pride Council
- Recorders
- Summer Camps
- Swimming
- Theater
- World Languages

Non-Profit Partnerships

- Art For The Journey
- Blue Sky Fund
- Bon Secours, Parsley's Kitchen
- Camp Alkulana
- Camp Dudley and Kiniya
- First Tee Greater Richmond
- Girls On The Run
- Kids In The Kitchen
- Make Space
- Minds in Motion
- Overland
- Scouts
- Shrinemont
- Swim RVA

OUR NAMESAKE

ANNA JULIA COOPER (1858-1964)

Anna Julia Cooper was an educator, author, activist and one of the most prominent African American scholars in United States history. She gave voice to the African-American community during the 19th and 20th centuries, from the end of slavery to the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. Cooper—who once described her vocation as “the education of neglected people”—viewed learning as a means of true liberation. She is best known for her educational leadership, her challenges to the racist notion that African Americans were naturally inferior, and her groundbreaking collection of essays and speeches, *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South* (1892).

Anna Julia Cooper’s life spanned 105 years from the last days of slavery to the heart of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960’s. She grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina, and spent most of her adult life teaching and serving as a principal in numerous schools, including several in Washington, DC. A woman of deep religious faith and conviction, she was also an activist who fought for civil rights for her fellow African-Americans, equality for women, and the poor.



The Founding Board voted to name the School after Anna Julia Cooper on June 8th, 2009. Coincidentally, three days later the United States Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp in her honor. The only woman quoted within its pages, her call for freedom is included in the United States Passport: “The cause of freedom is not the cause of a race or a sect or a party or a class – it is the cause of humankind, the very birthright of humanity.” Her legacy lives on here at AJC, through students, often faced with difficult circumstances, striving to reach their full potential — and through those called to uplift them along the way.



“ Our *money*, our *schools*, our *governments*, our *free institutions*, our *systems of religion and forms of creeds* are all first and last to be judged by this standard: *what sort of men and women do they grow?* ”

- Anna Julia Cooper



2022-2023 STAFF & BOARD

LEADERSHIP

MIKE MARUCA, Head of School
 YOLANDA GILLIAM, Principal
 MICHEAL CRANE, Lower School Dean
 LINTON WADE, Dean of Students and Athletics Director
 KATYE SNIPES, School Administrator
 LAURA MCGOWAN, Director of Development and Communications

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GUSSIE BANNARD, former Head, St. Catherine's School
 LAUREN BROWN, former Elementary Teacher, Collegiate School
 RAE COUSINS, Counsel, Brown-Greer, LLP
 BETSY FAUNTLEROY, AJC Board Secretary, Community Volunteer
 SHELTON HORSLEY, Senior Client Portfolio Manager, Thompson, Siegel & Walmsley LLC
 JILL HUNTER, AJC Board Chair, former Head of Lower School, Collegiate School
 CHARLES KLEINDIENST, President, Nerds to Go
 MAGGIE MCGEORGE, former V.P. of Corporate Finance and Research, John Hancock Financial Services
 TANISHA MOYER, Chair, AJC Parents' Association
 JOHN PULLEN, Chief Growth Officer, Luck Companies
 MALCOLM RANDOLPH, Senior Vice President, Colliers
 GARRETT SAWYER, SVP, People Development, WayForth
 MO SHUMATE, former President, M & R Constructors
 MEG WALKER, Community Volunteer
 MIKE WALKER, Consultant
 ELIZABETH WALLACE, Community Volunteer
 FLEET WALLACE, Managing Principal, McCann Realty Partners
 BRENT WINN, AJC Board Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer, Medalist Diversified REIT

EMERITUS

JOHN STANCHINA
 WESLEY WRIGHT, Jr.

FACULTY & STAFF

INGRID ADDISON, Admissions
 JAYME ALEXANDER, Title I
 CAROL ALLEN, Librarian
 KELSEY BARNES, Outpatient Therapist
 SUSAN BARSTOW, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
 KELVIN BELTON, Director of Maintenance
 CHRISTA BENTON, Director of Counseling & Student Life
 BRIDGETTE CRADDOCK, Facilities Manager
 J'NIQUE CRADDOCK, Lower School Kitchen
 MARY DESCH, Director of Graduate Placement & Support
 JENESSE EVERTSON, 1st Grade
 NOEL FAUNTLEROY, Assistant Coordinator for Food Services
 GRACE FLANAGAN, 2nd Grade
 THEO FRANKEL, 2nd Grade Assistant
 EMILY FRITZ, 3rd Grade
 CHRISTY GORE, 5th Grade Language Arts
 PAULA HARPER, Bookkeeper
 ABBY HARSH, Math
 MEREAL HUGHES, Science & English
 ELIZABETH JOHNSON, Middle School Academic Support
 LORIN JOHNSON, Graduate Support Coordinator
 BRIAN KEIPER, Social Studies & History
 GWYN KOENIG, Middle School Academic Support
 STEVE MCNAMEE, 5th Grade
 SHANNON MOISE, Graduate Support Asst.
 KRISSI MORLEY, Development & Communications
 TANISHA MOYER, Lower School Administrator
 MELISSA O'TOOLE, English
 JULISA ROBINSON, Kindergarten
 JONATHAN SCOTT, Dishwasher Swing Cook
 LAURIE SHADOWEN, Math & Social Studies
 VICTORIA SUTTON, 3rd Grade
 SAM TREPP, Middle School Math
 PAIGE TRIVETT, Development & Communications
 SHOLA WALKER, Director of Food Services
 IAN WEBER, Administrative Coordinator

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ANNA JULIA COOPER
SCHOOL

faith • knowledge • pride