The Power of Reading Partnerships: Why STAIR Matters in AACPS

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In Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS), we know that reading is the foundation for academic success and lifelong learning. When students develop strong literacy skills early, they are better positioned to succeed not only in school but also in their future careers and communities. That is why partnerships like STAIR (Start The Adventure In Reading) are so important.

STAIR has been a valued partner in supporting elementary students who need additional reading assistance. Through its dedicated volunteers, the organization provides one-on-one tutoring that helps students strengthen their reading skills while building confidence and a love for learning. These relationships give students the focused attention they need to grow as readers.

One of the most powerful aspects of the STAIR program is that it goes beyond academics. While improving literacy remains the primary goal, students also gain encouragement, consistency, and positive adult connections. A caring volunteer who shows up week after week sends a powerful message to a child: **"You matter, and I believe in you."**

Dr. Mark Bedell, Superintendent of AACPS, often emphasizes the importance of community partnerships in helping students achieve their full potential. Organizations like STAIR demonstrate what can happen when community members invest their time and talents in supporting young learners. Their commitment reflects a shared belief that every child deserves the opportunity to succeed.

The impact of STAIR can be seen in classrooms across our schools. Students who once struggled to engage with books approach reading with greater confidence. They are more willing to take risks, tackle challenging texts, and celebrate their progress. These successes may start with a single tutoring session, but they can lead to lasting positive outcomes.

As Director of Mentorship Programs, I have seen firsthand how meaningful relationships can transform students' academic experiences. Whether through mentoring or literacy support, trusted adults play a critical role in helping young people thrive. STAIR's volunteers embody this commitment every day, serving as role models, encouragers, and champions for student success.

The partnership between AACPS and STAIR is a powerful example of what can be accomplished when schools and communities work together. We are grateful for the many volunteers who help students become stronger readers and more confident learners.

As we look toward the future, we remain committed to expanding opportunities for students to receive the support they need. Together, we can ensure that every child has the tools, encouragement, and opportunities necessary to succeed.

Thank you, STAIR volunteers, board members, and supporters, for helping our students start their own adventures in reading. Your efforts are making a difference—one student, one book, and one story at a time.



Mr. Dillard as a guest reader for STAIR at Georgetown East Elementary