



Board-to-Board, July 2024

A monthly report from the Albemarle County School Board to the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors

In Tandem with Board of Supervisors, School Board Expresses Support of LGBTQ+ Communities with Proclamation Recognizing Pride Month—In tandem with the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors Pride Month Proclamation, the Albemarle County School Board also expressed support for the LGBTQ+ community with a proclamation read and approved at its June 13, 2024, meeting.

A copy of the full proclamation can be found at the end of this report.

School Board Recognizes Juneteenth with Proclamation—The Albemarle County School Board recognized Juneteenth with a proclamation read and approved at its June 13, 2024, meeting.

A copy of the full proclamation can be found at the end of this report.

Assistant Superintendent of Strategic Planning Shares Preliminary Student Achievement Data—Assistant Superintendent for Strategic Planning Dr. Patrick McLaughlin shared preliminary student achievement data with the Board at its June 13, 2024, meeting.

This spring, Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) administered nearly 22,000 Standard of Learning (SOL) tests to our students and, with a new tool developed by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) that shows preliminary calculations as they come in, those results indicate that we will have more schools meet state accreditation standards than last year. We are seeing gains for our students in growth-adjusted pass rates across nearly all membership groups in reading and math and seeing slight increases in unadjusted pass rates — which do not account for student growth — in reading, math and science. Additionally, we anticipate a 4.5% decrease in chronic absenteeism rates.

These results are **preliminary** and will not be official until the VDOE releases its annual report in the fall. However, we will continue monitoring preliminary results released by the VDOE throughout the summer.

Dr. Haas Shares Letter on Cell Phone Policy in Wake of Gov. Youngkin Executive Order—In the wake of Governor Glenn Youngkin’s Executive Order 33, which aims to establish a cell phone-free education for all students, Superintendent Dr. Matthew Haas sent a letter regarding the ACPS Cell Phone Policy to all parents and students to remind them of the guidelines already in place at our schools.

According to the current ACPS cell phone policy, found in policy [JFC – Student Conduct](#), students may possess a cell phone, or other communication devices, on school property, including school buses. However, these devices are to remain off and out of sight during instructional time unless otherwise stated by the teacher.

The goals of this policy are to minimize distractions in our classrooms, promote good mental health among our students, prevent opportunities for violence or threats to arise, and enhance our focus on safety in our schools.

ACPS will continue to monitor any additional guidance or requirements from the Youngkin administration or the VDOE.

Albemarle County School Board Approves Selection of Damean Barfield as New Albemarle High School Principal—At its July 11, 2024, meeting, the Albemarle County School Board approved the selection of Damean Barfield to lead Albemarle High School at the start of the 2024-25 school year.

Mr. Barfield comes from Essex High School in Tappahannock, Virginia, and brings more than 15 years of experience as a school administrator to Albemarle County. Barfield earned a Bachelor of Science from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master of Education from Virginia Commonwealth University. Before his tenure as principal of Essex High School, Barfield served as an assistant principal at Hanover, Hermitage, Glen Allen, and Deep Run high schools, and Fairfield Middle School. Barfield began his career in education as a Health and Physical Education teacher in 1999.

Mr. Barfield said in a news interview with NBC29 News that he is most excited to meet the community and the students and work together to move the instructional needle. “I think safety is always going to be a top priority, both physically and emotionally,” he said.

ACPS Director of Transportation Provides Outlook for Upcoming School Year—Director of Transportation Jamie Gellner delivered a Department of Transportation update and outlook for next school year at the July 11, 2024, meeting.

The Department of Transportation had an on-time arrival rate of 97.6% for the 2023-24 school year and completed 18,681,174 safe miles, meaning no student was injured on our buses during the school year.

For the 2024-25 school year, our division will be implementing an Afternoon Supervision Program at all of our elementary schools. After a successful pilot program at Mountain View and Greer elementary schools last year, the program requires families of students who require supervision at the bus stop show a Pick-Up Pass provided to them by the school.

The number on the Pick-Up Pass must match the number for the student the driver has on file. In addition to displaying the pass, an adult at the bus stop may also show photo identification that matches the list of adults approved for pick-up, which is our current policy. This program aims to streamline student drop offs where supervision is necessary and improve the safety of our students by providing multiple avenues for identification of adults approved for pick up.

Currently, the Department of Transportation is projecting nine open routes for the beginning of the school year, meaning that these routes will not have an assigned permanent driver by the first day of school. While we aim to provide transportation to all students who request transportation, this is an improvement from the start of the 2022-23 school year, when we had 12 open routes at the beginning of school. We will continue to prioritize transportation for our Special Education students and will have a better count of open routes once enrollment is finalized during the first full week of August.

Office of Community Engagement Partners with Communities in Schools—The ACPS Office of Community Engagement has partnered with Communities in Schools (CIS) to provide additional resources and opportunities for our students.

CIS provides school-based Site Coordinators who perform a needs assessment to identify the key needs of the school and individual students. This assessment will also identify the work already being done to meet those needs before creating an annual plan for the school that identifies goals to work toward in the upcoming year.

Site Coordinators are hired by and employed by CIS. In ACPS, Communities in Schools will place one site coordinator each at Greer and Red Hill elementary schools and Journey Middle School. Albemarle High School will receive two Site Coordinators and there will also be one overall division Site Coordinator.

CIS will work with the Office of Community Engagement to connect with local partners. Albemarle Foundation for Education will assist CIS with securing foundation, corporate and individual investments. The Office of Community Engagement is currently planning a fall kickoff event to introduce CIS to the Albemarle County community and introduce opportunities for engagement.

School Board Begins Construction, Naming Process for New Southern Feeder Pattern Elementary School—

Work on construction documents and the bidding phase for a new elementary school in the Southern Feeder Pattern officially begun. At its July 11, 2024, meeting, the School Board heard a name recommendation for the new building, which will house students in the third through fifth grades at Mountain View Elementary School.

After more than a dozen meetings with ACPS staff, students, parents, and community members to gather feedback on several paired naming options, it was recommended to the School Board that the new school be named Mountain View Upper Elementary School and that the current school's name be revised to Mountain View Primary School.

The School Board will vote on this recommendation at its August 8 meeting.

Western Albemarle High School Student Qualifies for Olympics—After winning the men's 200-meter butterfly at the U.S. Olympic Swim Trials, Western Albemarle student Thomas Heilman made the U.S. Olympic Team and will compete in Paris, France, this summer.

Three other ACPS students competed in the trials, David King, Sara Czirjak and Grey Davis. Czirjak finished in 8th place and competed in the finals but did not qualify for the Olympics.

ACPS Partners with Northrup Grumman to Send 22 Students, 4 Teachers to Space Camp at U.S. Space & Rocket Center—For more than 15 years, Northrup Grumman has supported students from all over the United States in visiting Space Camp, held at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

This year, the company was looking for a division that could send up to 23 students and five teachers to the camp, and Albemarle County Public Schools fit the bill. Our division was fortunate enough to send 22 students from across Henley, Journey, Lakeside and Burley, along with four teachers from those schools to camp.

The students spent six days in Alabama attending classes that focused on space travel and solving technical challenges. They practiced communication skills, engineering challenges and learned about rockets and space history. They got a chance to explore astronaut training, robotics, rocketry and astronomy.

Our teachers were able to participate in a space academy for educators, where they learned new ways to present STEM curriculum in the classroom to increase engagement and career awareness.



Proclamation Celebrating LGBTQ+ Pride Month

WHEREAS, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month (LGBTQ+ Pride Month) is celebrated annually in June to commemorate the catalyst event of the 1969 Stonewall riots and works to achieve equal justice and equal opportunity for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ+) Americans; and

WHEREAS, on April 11, 2020, the Virginia Values Act was signed into law, making Virginia the first state in the South to protect LGBTQ+ people from discrimination in their daily lives, including discrimination in housing, public and private employment, public accommodations, and access to credit; and

WHEREAS, Albemarle County's stated mission is to enhance the well-being and quality of life for all citizens through the provision of the highest level of public service consistent with the prudent use of public funds; and

Albemarle County Schools' mission is, "Working together as a team, we will end the predictive value of race, class, gender, and special capacities for our children's success through high-quality teaching and learning for all. We seek to build relationships with families and communities to ensure every student succeeds. We will know every student." ACPS values are centered around equity, excellence, family and community, and wellness; and,

WHEREAS, Albemarle County Schools is committed to supporting through their actions and their partnerships the promotion of an equitable and inclusive Albemarle County that allows all members of our community to grow and thrive; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ individuals have shaped, advanced, and enriched the fabric of Albemarle County and our nation by making immense contributions to all areas of life, including government, business, arts and sciences, medicine, law enforcement, technology, and the military.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that we, the Albemarle County Schools, continue to affirm our commitment to our stated mission to enhance the well-being and quality of life of all students and members of our community and recognize with pride the rich cultural diversity and contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ+) residents to the vibrancy of Albemarle County.

Signed this 13th day of June 2024

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Katherine L. Cluff".

Chair of the School Board



JUNETEENTH 2024

WHEREAS, Albemarle County Schools, in keeping with the core principles of our great United States of America, believe that all persons are created equal and possess unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and

WHEREAS, on June 19, 1865, more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed to free all enslaved people, enslaved Americans in Galveston, Texas, were finally told that they were free from the bondage of slavery and were, for the first time recognized as citizens of our Nation; and

WHEREAS, Black Americans came to commemorate this day as Juneteenth with celebrations across the country, building new lives and a new tradition that we honor today; and **WHEREAS**, the Albemarle County Schools recognize the enduring cultural and historical significance of emancipation, acknowledges the universally cherished values of liberty and justice, and emphasizes our common humanity; and

WHEREAS, Albemarle County Schools encourage all persons in Albemarle County to recommit to our shared work to ensure racial justice and equity and to commemorate the centuries of struggle and progress led by educators, civil rights advocates, abolitionists, activists, lawyers, trade unions, religious leaders, public officials, and everyday Albemarle County residents who have brought us closer to fulfilling this promise.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that we, Albemarle County Schools, do hereby recognize June 19, 2024, as Juneteenth and celebrate the joy of Black people finally being free.

Signed this 13th day of June 2024

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Katherine L. Coffey".

Chair of the School Board