



Board-to-Board, September 2025

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

ACPS Shows Steady Momentum on SOLs and Attendance—Albemarle County Public Schools [maintained or improved its performance](#) on the 2024-25 Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments. Division-wide pass rates rose in math (74%, up 2 points) and science (70%, up 2 points), while reading held steady at 75% and history/social science was essentially unchanged at 72%. ACPS outperformed state averages in reading, math, and history, with science very near state results.

The division also made progress in reducing chronic absenteeism, which is strongly linked to academic performance. Students missing 10% or more of school days dropped from 17.7% in 2022-23 to 12.6% in 2023-24, then to 11.8% in 2024-25, with nearly all demographic student groups showing improvement.

Despite these gains, significant gaps persist among some student groups. For example, while the overall reading pass rate is 75%, Black students are at 47%. Economically disadvantaged students in math pass at about 50%, roughly 24 percentage points below the division average. Similar disparities show up for Hispanic students, English Learners, and students with disabilities.

Moving forward, ACPS intends to build on this momentum by continuing high instructional expectations and investing in supports targeted toward closing those achievement gaps, especially through focused interventions in literacy and math and maintaining attendance improvements.

Atalaya Sergi Appointed Executive Director of Albemarle Foundation for Education—The Albemarle Foundation for Education (AFE), the nonprofit partner of Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS), has [named Atalaya Sergi as its new Executive Director](#). Established in 2022, AFE works to close opportunity gaps, enhance student well-being, and support teacher retention within ACPS.

Sergi brings more than 15 years of leadership experience in nonprofit and philanthropic roles. Most recently she served as National Director of AmeriCorps Seniors, where she managed a \$230 million budget and supported nearly 1,000 grantees. She has also held leadership positions at Jumpstart for Young Children and began her career in education and social work with Charlottesville City Public Schools.

Her educational background includes a master's degree in social work from Virginia Commonwealth University and a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Virginia.

Superintendent Matthew Haas and AFE Board President Randy Tripp Jr. remarked that Sergi's experience, vision, and commitment to public education will strengthen AFE's ability to expand opportunities and ensure equitable access to learning for all ACPS students.

ACPS Marks Key Construction Milestone for Mountain View Upper Elementary—On September 4, Albemarle County Public Schools held a [topping-out ceremony for Mountain View Upper Elementary School](#), celebrating placement of the highest steel beam, a major milestone in its construction. Students, teachers, staff, school board members, state and local officials, and community partners gathered to sign a ceremonial beam—draped in the American flag—before it was hoisted into place.

When complete, the school will serve up to 500 students in grades 3-5. It is designed to address capacity needs, relieve overcrowding at Mountain View Elementary, and offer modern, light-filled, collaborative classrooms plus outdoor learning and community spaces. This will be ACPS's first new elementary school in over 20 years.

Construction began in February 2025, with opening slated for the 2026-27 school year. Architect VMDO led the design through a community-driven process, while Nielsen Builders serves as the general contractor. The facility is being built with sustainability in mind (energy efficiency, daylight, access to nature), flexible design, and accessible features to support diverse learning needs.

ACPS Reminds Families About Secure Gun Storage During SMART Week—As part of its ongoing commitment to student safety, Albemarle County Public Schools sent a [community message](#) reminding families about the importance of secure storage of firearms in homes. The message, issued during SMART Week, encourages parents and guardians to store guns unloaded, locked, and separate from ammunition. ACPS also highlights that safe storage practices help reduce risks of accident, misuse, or access by unauthorized individuals.

The notice provides practical tips and resources for safe gun storage, including guidance on using gun locks or safes and checking with law enforcement or community organizations for available assistance programs. It frames the communication as part of ACPS's broader efforts to educate the community—not only through policy, but by building shared awareness and responsibility around safety in homes.

This message aligns with ACPS's safety and wellness priorities by engaging families as partners in prevention. By sending it during SMART Week, ACPS leverages an established observance to amplify the impact of the message and remind stakeholders that school safety goes beyond the school building.

Albemarle County Public Schools Launches New Crisis Communications Page—ACPS has launched a new Crisis Communications page at k12albemarle.org/crisis to provide families and the community with timely, accurate updates during school emergencies. The page features a clear status banner, regular updates during ongoing situations, and explanations of emergency terms—all in one reliable place, alongside the phone, email, and text messages families already receive.

Early in September, the page was put to the test when Walton Middle School entered a "Secure" protocol due to nearby police activity. The page received nearly 1,000 views that day, demonstrating its value as a trusted source of information. An archive of those updates remains available on the page as an example of how it is used during an active situation.

ACPS Reaffirms Mental Health Support in Statement for Suicide Prevention Awareness Month—At its last meeting, the Albemarle County School Board was presented with a [statement for Suicide Prevention Awareness Month](#), underscoring the division’s ongoing commitment to supporting mental health and wellbeing across all schools. ACPS emphasizes fostering safe, responsive environments where students feel seen, supported, and connected.

In the statement, ACPS stresses the importance of openly discussing mental health, recognizing warning signs, and ensuring students know how to access help. The division calls on staff, families, and community partners to collaborate in building resilience, reducing stigma, and promoting emotional awareness and self-regulation for students.

This reaffirmation reinforces ACPS’s broader mental health strategy, which includes prevention, early intervention, and ensuring that supports are in place — both through school-based resources (counseling, wellness programs, etc.) and by connecting students with external help when needed.

A [resolution recognizing September as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month](#) was also presented at the meeting.

Two Albemarle County Public Schools Educators Receive Teacher Innovation Grants—The Public Education Foundation of Charlottesville-Albemarle (PEFCA) has awarded [15 Teacher Innovation Grants](#) this year, totaling more than \$20,000 and impacting over 4,000 students across Albemarle County and Charlottesville schools. These competitive grants support creative, teacher-designed projects that extend beyond regular school funding.

At Albemarle High School, teacher Michelle Banaszak is leading a project titled Pocketalk Peer Tutoring Center. The idea is to use Pocketalk devices to aid English Language Learners (ELLs). They replace cell-phone translation tools (which are restricted in school settings) and aim to provide more accurate, reliable translation in academic/tutoring & social settings. It's expected to involve over 90 students and 100 teachers.

At Monticello High School, teacher Jeannette Stott is leading a project titled Making Printmaking Accessible. The project will acquire linocut tools, soft-cut linoleum, and ink so that first- and second-year art students can engage in traditional printmaking techniques. Students will learn how to carve blocks, work with design elements, understand reverse-image carving, experiment with color applications, and produce real printed work. It’s expected to involve about 150 students and 2 teachers.

These awards showcase the innovation of ACPS educators and highlight how external partnerships can directly strengthen learning opportunities for ACPS students.