



Albemarle County Public Schools
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Board-to-Board Report for July

Students Return in Wake of August 12 Attacks

Fresh off a long summer break, students all over Albemarle County returned August 23 to their elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. Central Office staff were present at every school building to ensure a smooth opening and support principals with issues as they arose. We are happy to report yet another school year beginning successfully. Students saw old friends, met new teachers, and some even experienced the time-honored tradition of struggling with their middle school lockers. But the start of the 2017-18 school year began with a cloud hanging above the community, and it is a cloud that has cast shade on every young person in our community: the August 12 attacks on Charlottesville.

Shortly after news of the tragic event hit, ACPS Superintendent Dr. Pam Moran, and Charlottesville City Schools Superintendent Dr. Rosa Atkins, released a joint statement in which they communicated a clear message about our shared community values, and how we are to conduct ourselves now that the world has come to associate Charlottesville with more than the University and Thomas Jefferson. “The message from Charlottesville to our nation must be stronger than ever before,” Moran and Atkins said. “That we are a community that values the safety of every person, the dignity of every resident, the respect of every background, the equality of every opportunity, and the strength of every collaboration that promotes the common good.”

We are fortunate to live in a community in which our public schools subscribe to a core set of positive beliefs. Just two days before the attacks division leadership worked with more than 100 teachers new to Albemarle County on this topic. Debbie Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning, encouraged the teachers to internalize ACPS’ values—Excellence, Young People, Community, and Respect—and to take risks in order to provide their students with a world class education. Moran echoed this sentiment: “I happen to believe that the important glue for how we get the learning results that we want for our children in Albemarle County doesn’t come from the power of one, it comes from the power of many. It’s what we do together that makes that difference.”

Our highest priority is providing all students and staff with a safe environment for learning. We have focused on aligning classroom activities with our core values, as well as the benefits that come from culturally responsive teaching strategies. Additionally, we have vetted and compiled a list of research and counseling resources, which can be accessed here: <https://goo.gl/GhxBXT>.

