



Board-to-Board, July, 2023

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

New apprenticeship program—Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) has received a \$200,000 grant from the Virginia Department of Education to support a [path to teaching via apprenticeship](#). Human Resources is now seeking teaching assistants with an associate degree to [join the two-year apprenticeship program](#). In this unique opportunity, participants will train alongside a skilled Master Teacher for two years, developing valuable classroom skills. This two-year position leads to full licensure and preparation to serve as a teacher of record.

In two years, participants will complete their bachelor's degree, receive two years of on-the-job training with a Master Teacher, and commit to three years of service beyond completion of the program. Benefits include progressive salary increases corresponding to the mastery of new teaching skills and techniques and full tuition paid to complete a bachelor's degree at James Madison University.

Participants must hold an associate degree, possess strong communication and interpersonal skills, and be willing to complete a bachelor's degree while apprenticing full time.

Transportation updates— Due to an ongoing bus driver shortage, the ACPS Department of Transportation has lacked the resources necessary to meet the transportation needs of every student. In recent years, this has resulted in long wait times at bus stops, late arrivals to school or home, and other circumstances that have been stressful for students and their families.

ACPS is making every effort to improve the experience of our bus riders by:

- Changing the annual transportation registration process so as to plan routes based on the most up-to-date information.
- Expanding [walk zones](#) at four schools and created new walk zones at another five schools.
- Eliminating some bus stops that were serving a small number of students and established community bus stops that will allow us to serve a larger number of students in less time.
- Building a small number of “stacked routes” that will allow drivers to drive two bus routes each morning and afternoon and still accomplish on-time arrival.
- Creating a “relief driver” program that will enable the quick coverage of driver absences without disruption to service.
- And, as a supplement to the practice of removing a student from a bus route who does not ride for 10 consecutive days, establishing a waiting list to simplify our ability to reach out to another family in need.

Despite these ongoing improvement efforts, ACPS will be unable to provide bus transportation to every student in our school system who needs it. The school division is communicating with families to notify them of whether or not their children will have a bus route in the 2023-24 school year, and will continue to work with all families to meet their needs to every extent possible.

Updated safety training and protocols—More than 160 members of Albemarle County’s police, fire rescue, and public schools participated in a July 14 drill to better prepare for the possibility of an active shooter situation in schools. With John Oprandy, Albemarle’s Deputy Chief of Emergency Management, at the helm, the active school threat drills put six months of training into practice.

The goal of this drill for ACPS was to practice response as well as to give county emergency responders an opportunity to understand what the school staff and students might respond in such a scenario.

Additionally, ACPS is currently implementing the [ALICE training protocol](#) across all schools in this year. ALICE, which stands for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate, is a nationally recognized and evidence-based training program designed to empower school personnel and students with proactive strategies to respond effectively to a situation that involves an active shooter or violent intruder. The program is a change from the traditional lockdown-only approach to a more comprehensive and flexible model, empowering individuals to make informed decisions based on real-time information during a crisis.

ACPS transitioned to the ALICE protocol because it involves:

1. **A comprehensive approach:** Unlike traditional lockdown procedures, ALICE training provides a range of options, empowering individuals to decide the best course of action based on their situational awareness. This allows for more flexibility in responding to a crisis scenario and increases the chances of survival.
2. **Realistic training:** ALICE training involves realistic and dynamic simulations, preparing students and staff to respond effectively in high-stress situations. Through these simulations, participants gain confidence in their abilities, which can be crucial in life-threatening situations. ACPS modifies these drills based on recommendations from the National Association of School Psychologists to make ALICE training trauma informed.
3. **Enhanced communication:** ALICE emphasizes the importance of communication during an emergency, ensuring that relevant information is shared quickly and effectively, allowing for better decision-making and coordinated responses.
4. **Collaboration with law enforcement:** Our partnership with local law enforcement agencies in implementing ALICE ensures that our training aligns with the best practices employed by first responders.
5. **Active participation:** ALICE encourages active participation from everyone within the school community, including students, teachers, administrators, and support staff. This fosters a sense of shared responsibility for safety, enhancing overall preparedness.

It is essential to emphasize that the ALICE training protocol is not about promoting fear or paranoia; rather, it equips our community with valuable skills and knowledge to respond

effectively in rare but potentially dangerous situations. ALICE training is age-appropriate and will be tailored to suit the developmental stages of our students.