



Board-to-Board, April 2025

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

Albemarle County Public Schools to Expand Intensive Support Center in 2025-26—Starting with the 2025-26 school year, ACPS will establish its own separate public day program exclusively for Albemarle students that is separate from the Piedmont Regional Education Program (PREP), which oversees Ivy Creek School. This ACPS-run program will be independent of the current PREP Ivy Creek School, which will relocate to a new site outside of ACPS. The newly expanded Intensive Support Center (ISC) will remain at the current Ivy Creek School building and will now include students who previously attended Ivy Creek School.

What Does This Mean?

- The Ivy Creek School name will remain with PREP, which will relocate its program at the end of the school year.
- The current Ivy Creek School building, an ACPS-owned facility, will continue to house the new ISC program.
- Students who previously would have been placed outside of ACPS due to their support needs will now be served within our school division.
- Students' day-to-day programming will remain unchanged but will be better integrated with ACPS resources and services.

Why Is This Transition Happening?

Before this expansion, ACPS had to send students with Emotional Disabilities who could not be served in their neighborhood schools to a regional program outside of ACPS. Special education support specialists and programs were also spread across multiple makeshift locations, including trailers and rented storefronts. This expansion allows ACPS to consolidate and enhance these critical services.

Key Benefits of the Expansion:

- Students who require intensive supports will be served in one central location rather than across multiple sites.
- ACPS support staff will be housed in a single facility, improving efficiency and access to resources for students and educators.
- Preschool special education evaluation services will now be available at an ACPS school site instead of a rented community storefront, creating a more accessible and welcoming environment for our youngest learners.

- Post High students (ages 18-22 with IEPs) will have a dedicated school site while maintaining access to a house-based setting for independent and daily living skills instruction.

ACPS is committed to ensuring a smooth and effective transition. We are incredibly grateful to PREP for their years of partnership and for the critical role they have played in supporting students.

Albemarle County School Board Appoints Principals for Henley Middle and Woodbrook

Elementary—At its February 27, 2025, meeting, the Albemarle County School Board appointed Rick Vrhovac as principal of Henley Middle School, effective immediately. Vrhovac has served as substitute principal throughout the current school year and will continue as principal through the 2025-26 school year. Then, at its March 13 meeting, the board appointed Christie Isaiah as principal of Woodbrook Elementary School, also effective immediately. Isaiah has been serving as interim principal at Woodbrook since the start of the school year.

Vrhovac brings extensive leadership experience to Henley, having previously served as principal at both Lakeside Middle School and Monticello High School. His background provides valuable continuity for the school community as he continues in the role. In a message to families on February 28, Superintendent Dr. Matthew Haas praised Vrhovac's leadership, noting that he has "built strong relationships with students, staff, and families, reinforcing Henley's collaborative and caring culture."

The school division plans to begin the search for a new principal for Henley for the 2026-27 school year in late winter 2025-26.

Following a rigorous search process that included a community survey, a diverse hiring committee representing the Woodbrook community recommended Isaiah for the role of Woodbrook's principal. The superintendent endorsed the committee's selection, and the school board approved her appointment.

Isaiah's official appointment as principal comes after serving the Woodbrook community since 2022, first as assistant principal and most recently as interim principal. She brings 16 years of school leadership experience at the elementary and middle school levels in both Charlottesville City Schools and Albemarle County Public Schools, along with a deep commitment to fostering a supportive and enriching environment for students and staff.

Vrhovac and Isaiah's appointments reflect the division's commitment to strong, student-centered leadership. With their experience and dedication, both principals will continue fostering environments where students, staff, and families can thrive.

Albemarle County Public Schools Breaks Ground on the Albemarle Career Exploration Academy at

Lambs Lane Campus—Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) kicked off construction of the Albemarle Career Exploration (ACE) Academy at its Lambs Lane campus on Tuesday, February 25. Designed to house the expansion of ACPS' Scholars Studios, the approximately 60,000-square-foot facility will serve up to 400 high school students daily.

The ACE Academy Lambs Lane will host several of ACPS' new Scholars Studios, which are designed to help students explore career opportunities that align with their interests. Of the 12 new Scholars Studios, six will be housed at the ACE Academy Lambs Lane, including the Savor, Venture, Solve, Thrive, Blueprint, and Impact studios.

A team from Quinn Evans partnered with ACPS to design the space and spent many months gathering community input on the needs and desires for the new facility, which will include a range of flexible lab and studio spaces, project storage designed to double as a display of student work, seminar spaces where students can connect with local business leaders, and access to tools and technology throughout the building to support several of ACPS' new Scholars Studios.

Jamerson-Lewis Construction has been awarded the bid to build this new facility. A new parking lot will also be constructed on the northwest side of Albemarle High School (AHS) and adjacent to the Vehicle Maintenance Facility and AHS sports fields to support the ACE Academy Lambs Lane and other parts of the Lambs Lane campus.

The Lambs Lane campus was identified as the ideal location for the ACE Academy Lambs Lane during a study undertaken in 2022 in partnership with DRL Group. The campus, which also houses Albemarle High School, Journey Middle School, Greer Elementary School, the Boys & Girls Club, and the Piedmont Regional Education Program (including Ivy Creek School), is centrally located near some of the county's most densely populated neighborhoods.

Set to open for students at the start of the 2026-27 school year, the ACE Academy Lambs Lane will serve as a sister facility to Center I, which was approved for renaming as the Albemarle Career Exploration (ACE) Academy Seminole Trail in January 2025 and currently houses the Link Studio.

Albemarle County Public Schools Breaks Ground on Mountain View Upper Elementary

School—Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) celebrated a major milestone on February 7, 2025, with a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Mountain View Upper Elementary School. Designed specifically for students in grades 3 through 5, the new school will provide an innovative learning environment that supports the academic, social, and developmental needs of children in this age group.

Through the procurement process, the school division chose VMDO Architects, a firm with extensive experience in creating student-centered educational spaces, to design the school. Nielsen Builders won the bid to lead the construction of the facility, ensuring that the vision for this new learning space becomes a reality.

The school's concept was envisioned by a steering committee that included students, families, school division staff, and other interested parties. The design team was similarly led by school and community members with an understanding of the need for an innovative building that will serve this age group, as well as employees, families, and the entire community. Both groups maintained a focus on the continuity of education for students in the Mountain View district, as well as a continued desire for those who populate both school buildings to belong to a singular school community.

The ACPS Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee initially determined the need for this school through its work studying enrollment and population trends in Albemarle County. Through extensive community engagement, several key priorities emerged and have been integrated into the school's design. The building will feature abundant natural daylighting to enhance student well-being and engagement, as well as bike and pedestrian connectivity to support safe and sustainable transportation options. In addition, the school will include a state-of-the-art accessible playground, ensuring that all students have access to inclusive play and movement opportunities. The school's design also fosters both independence and continuity, allowing students to develop greater autonomy while maintaining strong peer and faculty connections.

As one of the most sustainable buildings in ACPS to date, Mountain View Upper Elementary School will feature a geothermal HVAC system to enhance energy efficiency and solar panels to support renewable energy use, furthering the division's commitment to environmentally responsible school facilities.

The school will offer students an engaging and developmentally appropriate space that fosters independence while maintaining their existing relationships and friendships. Faculty members have emphasized that the design prioritizes both community and personal growth, ensuring that students can thrive in a supportive and well-structured environment.

Construction is expected to be completed by August 2026. Specific leadership roles for the new school will be determined at a later date.

The development of Mountain View Upper Elementary School aligns with ACPS's ongoing commitment to innovative, student-centered learning environments. This project represents the division's investment in modern educational facilities that meet the evolving needs of students while supporting academic excellence and social development.

Noteworthy and Newsworthy

- Community Lab School Principal Chad Ratliff was [featured in Albemarle Magazine](#) in an article about how CLS models a project-based, interdisciplinary, and experiential learning method.
- On January 27, Scottsville fourth- and fifth-grade students [visited the new Keene Convenience Center](#) to learn about the importance of recycling.
- On February 3, Lakeside Middle School student [Claire Meng took home the title of Spelling Bee Champ](#) for the second year in a row. This earned her a spot in the Scripps Regional Spelling Bee to try for a chance to compete in the national bee.
- On February 6, ACPS celebrated the [groundbreaking of the new Mountain View Upper Elementary School](#).
- On February 7, fifth graders at Agnor Elementary [learned about energy transformation and solar power](#) with representatives of Madison Energy.
- On February 18, our [Transportation Department hosted a pancake breakfast](#) to celebrate our incredible bus drivers and thank them for their hard work and dedication to ACPS.
- On February 26, students at Ivy Elementary School [shared their research on conservation efforts](#) with the community. There, they explained their findings, why the issue matters to them, and offered ideas for protecting the environment.

- This month, we released a [feature on Equity Coordinator and national pickleball champ Megan Washburn](#), who told us about how she got into the sport and how she uses the skills she learned in her everyday life and work.
- On February 26, ACPS celebrated the [groundbreaking of the new ACE Academy Lambs Lane](#) facility.
- On February 27, [Albemarle High School hosted a Black Business Panel](#) to celebrate Black History Month. Here, students were able to listen to inspiring stories and ask questions of local black entrepreneurs.
- On February 28, students at [Woodbrook Elementary School held an assembly](#) celebrating all they've learned during Black History Month.
- On March 1, the wonderful students of Scottsville Elementary, along with their principal, Cyndi Wells, [took part in the 5th annual roadside trash community clean-up](#), coordinated by Ed Brooks at Yancey Community Center.
- Henley Middle School students Adlee Bullard, Celeste Ide, and Elin Rudzinski achieved [4th place at the National History Day competition](#) with their project titled "Edwin Chadwick and the Report of 1842: An Unlikely Hero's Fight for Better Sanitation." They presented their work to the Governor and other delegates at the state capitol, followed by a tour of the building on March 5.
- On March 6, [children's book author Troy Cummings visited Stone-Robinson Elementary School](#) to share his writing process with students.
- [Eight AHS students won medals at the District 4 National History Day Competition](#) on March 8 at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton for their research projects! Students swept the senior individual paper category winning all three places.
- On March 11, ACPS, UVA Pipelines & Pathways, and PVCC partnered to host [Senior Day](#), where students were able to meet with local prospective employers looking to hire.
- On March 12, Burley Middle School hosted an all-county band assessment and workshop [where all ACPS middle school bands](#) came together to practice and share their performances with one another.
- Stony Point Elementary librarian Julia Trammell-McGill, was honored as the [Shenandoah Regional School Librarian of the Year](#) by VAASL.
- On Thursday, March 13, members of the [Charlottesville Cardinals Wheelchair Basketball Team visited Burley Middle School](#), offering an inspiring and hands-on experience for the students.
- On March 20, Brownsville Elementary students got a visit from Sen. Creigh Deeds, [who read a book to them](#) about indoor farming.