



Legislative Agenda

VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2017

Equity & Access for Every Student

Visitors to Albemarle County Public Schools' Central Office are greeted by a small portrait of four school children, their arms around one another's shoulders. Above the children, in bold block letters, is the phrase **All Means All**.

This message is central to our organization, and it is driving our strategic decision to emphasize **equity and access** for every student.

To ensure this outcome for all students throughout the Commonwealth, we believe the General Assembly should focus on:

1. Expanding broadband internet access;
2. Updating the Standards of Quality to meet the needs of contemporary education; and
3. Implementing balanced assessments.

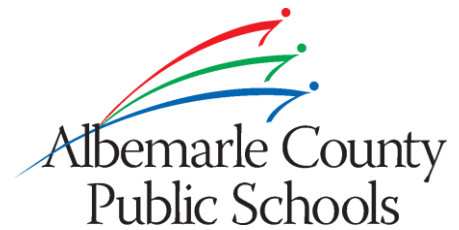
The computer is the device of the 21st Century. The traditional textbook is being replaced by digital content, yet almost **40 percent of rural Virginians, and 46 percent of rural Albemarle County residents, do not have access to broadband internet**. It is paramount that Virginia graduates technology-literate students who are skilled navigators of the wealth of information the internet provides. Careers that do not require technology skills now are the exception, not the rule, so we encourage the General Assembly to

eliminate the digital divide for all students in the Commonwealth.

Nearly every school division in the Commonwealth provides greater levels of service than required by the Standards of Quality (SOQ). Whether the area in question be school counselors, nurses, or technology specialists, the SOQ were designed for a factory model education system that does not meet the needs of education in the information age. Our children are heading into an economy that is changing more rapidly than ever before. The investments we make in our students must prepare them for the challenges of **their future**.

While we support instructional standards, assessment via standardized tests has resulted in emphasizing rote memorization and teaching to the test—two outcomes that do not promote the deep learning and critical thinking skills our students need to be successful in the workforce. Instead, we support **project-based learning**, which has students taking a more active role in the demonstration of their learning, and **authentic, balanced assessments**, such as portfolios and end-of-year projects.

We thank you for your attention to these issues, and we look forward to working with you to ensure equity and access throughout the Commonwealth during the 2017 legislative session.



Our Mission

The core purpose of Albemarle County Public Schools is to establish a community of learners and learning, through relationships, relevance and rigor, one student at a time.

Our Vision

All learners believe in their power to embrace learning, to excel, and to own their future.

Our Core Values

Excellence
Young People
Community
Respect

Our Student-Centered Goal

All Albemarle County Public Schools students will graduate having actively mastered the lifelong-learning skills they need to succeed as 21st century learners, workers and citizens.

Our Objectives

1. We will engage every student.
2. We will implement balanced assessments.
3. We will improve opportunity and achievement.
4. We will create and expand partnerships.
5. We will optimize resources.

2017 Priorities

► Increased Funding for Public Education

The Albemarle County School Board applauds the General Assembly for increasing their investment in Virginia's public schools in the 2016 budget. However, only recently has public education seen investments that **even begin** to match 2008 levels. Adjusted for inflation, this translates to an approximately \$60 million underfunding of Albemarle County Public Schools over the last eight years.

- We support increases in state funding, with emphasis on differentiated funding for individual schools with populations of economically-disadvantaged students that exceed the state average.
- We support a comprehensive review of SOQ guidelines, with an eye toward raising benchmarks to levels that reflect the needs of contemporary education.
- The Commonwealth is a partner in education, and as such should fully reflect in all of its calculations of SOQ and other costs the full costs of inflation.

► High School Redesign

We are actively planning for the redesign of the high school experience to better prepare students for higher education and the workforce, and we thank the General Assembly, Board of Education, and Governor for their efforts.

- We support graduation requirements that provide students with opportunities to develop and demonstrate adaptable skills in non-traditional classroom environments like internships, mentorships, and job shadowing.
- We support affording local school divisions the ability to offer alternatives to the amount of "seat time" required in order to earn verified credit for a course that counts toward graduation.

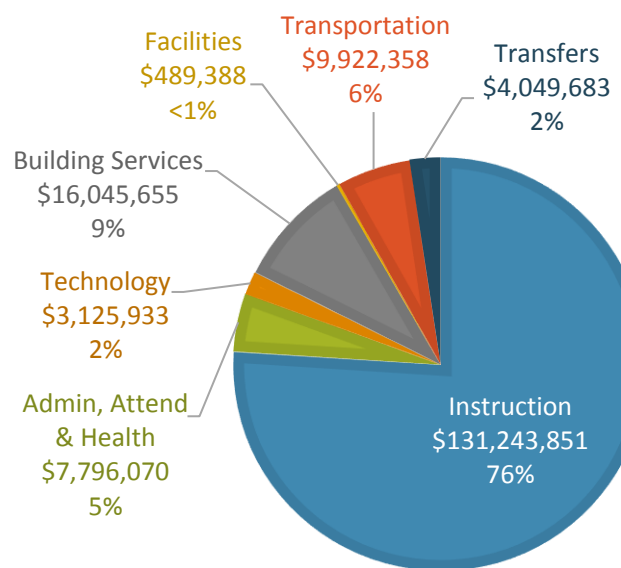
► Assessment & Accreditation Reform

We believe in assessing students using a variety of measures, and we would welcome the inclusion of additional measures of student learning and growth, especially locally-developed assessments. For example, the use of portfolios allow students to think critically and creatively, to reflect and reason, to problem-solve, and ultimately to communicate their new understanding of the world around them.

- We support efforts to assess student growth throughout the year, and to recognize individual schools and teachers who demonstrate significant results in student academic gains.
- We support legislation that would (1) make all SOL tests end-of-year tests, rather than cumulative tests, and (2) establish a reasonable amount of time that a student must be enrolled in a Virginia public school before his or her test scores count toward accreditation.

2016-17 Budget Appropriation

Total Adopted Budget:
\$172.67M



Positions & Policy Statements

► Afterschool Program Regulation

We support legislation from the General Assembly that (i) distinguishes afterschool enrichment programs that are housed in and operated by public schools, as well as the facilities that support those programs, from private or in-home daycare facilities, and (ii) returns extended day enrichment programs that are housed in and operated by public schools, as well as the facilities that support those programs, to the purview of the Virginia Department of Education.

► Broadband Infrastructure

We support legislation that would assist communities in their efforts to deploy broadband to rural and underserved areas that do not have the density to attract the private sector. For example, we do not intend to compete with the private sector for customers along the Route 29 corridor, but we do aim to serve the K-12 students who live in the far reaches of Albemarle County like Blackwell's Hollow, Howardsville, and Earlysville, among others.

► Charter Schools

We oppose a Constitutional Amendment that would permit external authorities to establish a charter school in a community without local school board approval, as doing so usurps local control of public education.

► Fair & Equitable Composite Index

We support reform of the composite index that would include a real property assessment component to reflect the real property tax monies actually received by the locality.

► School Bus Video-Monitoring Systems

We request that the General Assembly amend Virginia Code Section 46.2-844 to allow the companies that operate the cameras to access Department of Motor Vehicles records, similar to the provisions contained in Virginia Code Section 15.2-968.1's traffic signal enforcement program.

► Special Education

We support legislation that will provide school divisions with greater flexibility in the use of Children's Services Act funding in order to promote students remaining in their neighborhood schools.

We support future efforts to accompany Special Education state mandates with funding to support the implementation of those mandates. For example, school divisions would have benefitted greatly had additional funding accompanied the recent mandate to require autism, CPR, or dyslexia training.

We support efforts to study and revise the funding/staffing formula for Special Education to better meet student needs.

► Teacher Licensure

We praise the General Assembly's passage of HB279 (3-year CTE licensure), and we support increased local flexibility for school divisions to license CTE teachers who have applied work experience in STEM and entrepreneurship fields.

► Virtual Learning

We oppose the formation of a virtual public high school that would fall under the jurisdiction of an entity other than the Virginia Board of Education.

2016 Division Snapshot

Our Facilities

26 schools

- 16 elementary schools (PK-5)
- 5 middle schools (6-8)
- 1 charter middle school (6-8)
- 3 comprehensive high schools (9-12)
- 1 charter high school (9-12)

1 Engineering Lab School (6-8)

3 STEM/STEM-H Academies (9-12)

1 Vocational-Technical Center

1 Alternative Education Center

Our Employees

1,251 teachers

- 63% hold advanced degrees
- 3% are National Board Certified
- Average years of teaching experience: 14

1,238 other school division employees

Our Students

13,792 students (PK-12)

- 10.1% are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP)
- 28.7% are eligible for free/reduced meals
- 11.4% are served by Special Education
- 8.8% are identified as Gifted

Other Statistics

Our students were born in 94 countries and speak 75 languages.

Student-to-computer ratio

- 1:1 for grades 6-12, grades 3-5 in 13 of 16 elementary schools, and grades 4-5 in 3 of 16 elementary schools
- 2:1 for all other grades

Over 9,000 meals served daily

14,005 school bus miles traveled daily

240 homeless students served last school year

HOW DO WE COMPARE?

	ACPS	State
On-time Graduation Rate	95%	91.3%
Drop-out Rate	2.9%	5.3%
Graduates Who Earned an Advanced Studies Diploma	67.3%	51.7%
Average Verbal SAT Scores	564	518
Math	565	516
Writing	541	499
Students Earning a Passing Score (3, 4 or 5) on AP Exams	82.1%	TBA

SCHOOL BOARD

Jack Jouett District
Kate Acuff, Pd.D., Chair

Rio District
Pamela Moynihan

Rivanna District
Jason Buyaki

Samuel Miller District
Graham Paige

Scottsville District
Steve Koleszar, Vice-Chair

White Hall District
David Oberg

At-Large
Jonno Alcaro

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