

March 2021

Albemarle County Parent Resource Center is a local effort to link families, schools and communities together to better support children with disabilities in the school setting. The Albemarle County Parent Resource Center has a goal of fostering a positive relationship between parents and schools in an effort to assist parents with questions and planning, as well as through the provision of resources and training. The Parent Resource Center is being operated by Michael Armstrong for the 2020-2021 School Year.

The Parent Resource Center is located at Albemarle County Public Schools, Department of Special Education, 401 McIntire Rd., Room 323, Charlottesville, VA 22902. You can contact the Parent Resource Center at (434) 296-5885 or by email at [SPEDHELP@k12albemarle.org](mailto:SPEDHELP@k12albemarle.org).



## Special Education Advisory Committee

Next meeting:

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

[Online Live Streaming](#)

## In the News...

### School Board Business

#### Stage 4: Return to School Planning

The Superintendent of Schools, Matt Haas, proposed that students return to Stage 4 beginning in March. The School Board approved this recommendation to begin March 15th. While many students with disabilities have already had the option to return to school for in person learning, particularly those students served in ABASE (Resource Model for Student with Autism), CBASE (Curricular Support for students requiring a modified curriculum), and Early Childhood Special Education (Special Education Preschool), Stage 4 opens the possibility of returning for students across all grades, for all least some time each week. The option for children to remain in their virtual instructional program is still available during Stage 4.

All the details on Stage 4 can be found at:

<https://www.k12albemarle.org/our-division/return-to-school/stage-4>

#### The Budget: Special Education

The Superintendent's Budget request was presented on Thursday, February 18, which also kicked off the budget work sessions that will continue through March. That same evening, the budget request was broken down into more detail and included the request for Special Education presented by Kevin Kirst. Specifically, Kirst is requesting 5 full time positions to maintain the staffing models that support students with disabilities in Preschool through age 21.

Looking ahead, in April, Kirst is expected to present the division's plan for a little over \$3,000,000 in Federal and State funding for students with disabilities.

All the details on the School Budget for 21-22, including video of the presentation can be found at:

<https://www.k12albemarle.org/our-departments/fiscal-services/budget/budget-development>

## Covering all the BASEs:

### Special Education Programs in ACPS

March 23, 2021

6:30 - 7:30 PM

This session will provide participants with a review of the variety of Special Education programs in Albemarle County Public Schools with a Q & A session.

Registration required

[Click here to register](#)

or call (434) 296-5885.

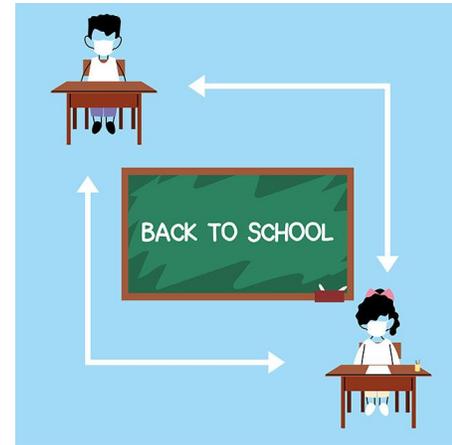


"March is a time of new beginnings, as we usher out winter and welcome the arrival of spring. On the educational calendar, March also marks the beginning of the 'Budget Season', and much like educators, parents allow themselves to start thinking about next year. In keeping with this theme, this month's PRC Newsletter brings you useful information about the Stage 4 opening - including helpful tips for your student, budget news, and a look at ACPS BASE models. Oh, and be sure to check out the new educational opportunities for parents as part of our ongoing series Parent Resource Center Presents." - Michael Armstrong, Parent Resource Center

## 10 COVID-19 Back to School Tips

As Albemarle County Public Schools prepares to offer more students the opportunity to return to school for instruction, Amy Forrer, MD, a board-certified pediatrician and internal medicine physician with Emerson Family Medicine of Maynard, and a mother of three school-age children, shares these tips to help kids successfully navigate their return to learning.

1. **Mask etiquette:** Teach your children how to wear their masks properly. (Be sure they remove them using the ear straps instead of the fabric for optimal hygiene!) Encourage them to practice wearing masks for short periods at home and especially when they are out in public, gradually increasing the amount of time that they can tolerate the mask. Plan to supply your children with extra masks for school. Children need to hear from their parent that masks are one of the best ways to protect ourselves and others from getting COVID-19.
2. **Encourage proper hygiene:** Encourage hand washing often, have some fun with it by singing a song or telling some jokes while they wash. Establish consistent house rules about hand washing, including every time before family members leave home and come into the home from outside, after going to the bathroom, and before and after eating.
3. **Reading:** Keep reading to younger children and encourage older children to read books of their choice. Helpful resources are school and library reading lists. If you have not already, this is a good time to establish a quiet, designated learning area in your home for your child. Ask your child what is needed to be successful completing school assignments at home.
4. **Socialize again with other children:** During this time of stay-home, millions of children around the country have halted playdates and socializing in-person with their peers. While this was essential for health reasons and to help slow the spread of the virus, it can make it tricky when students are back in the classroom with their friends and peers. Now is the time to reorient children to socializing in a safe way. Choose a family you know and trust to have a physically distanced picnic at the school playground or a local park. Most children will bounce back to socializing, but it might be helpful for them to do so with a parent present first, before school starts.
5. **Get back on a regular sleep schedule:** Many students have been on a different sleep schedule throughout the pandemic. They are likely going to bed later and getting up later in the morning. Parents can start incrementally pushing up bedtime in mid-August to help ease the transition. Try to follow a consistent bedtime routine and avoid electronics.
6. **Have conversations:** Having open, age-appropriate conversations with your children will help them know they are not alone, that we do not have all the answers, that flexibility is very important in this time of COVID-19, and that scientists, health experts, parents, teachers and other leaders are doing everything possible to ensure their health and safety.
7. **Remember, we're all in it together:** Talk with your children and help them understand that anyone can get the virus, no matter where they are from in the world. This is important to reduce any potential stereotypes and ensure compassion and equity in the classroom and beyond.
8. **School may remain virtual for some:** Some families may decide not to send their children to school this season for various reasons. Explain to your children that every family is different and that household members' medical conditions and other factors influence parental decisions about returning to school.
9. **Prevent separation anxiety:** After spending many long months at home, children may feel nervous about going back to school and being apart from family members. Have conversations about going back to school and try to develop tools for your child to feel connected to home, such as notes in their lunchbox, or a family photo they can bring to school.
10. **Be available:** Your children may react to changes in the school in various ways. Be ready for some behavior changes — such as acting out in younger children and quietness in teens. Remember that pillow time before bed is a good time to listen to your child recount events and feelings from the day. This extra time provides a safe environment for children to express their feelings and you may be surprised how much you learn about them.



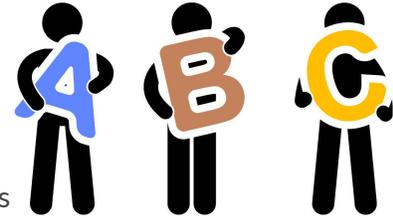
## The A, B, C's of Special Education

### A Parent's Guide to K - 12 Special Education BASE Models in Albemarle County Schools

Albemarle County Public Schools Department of Special Education has worked to create BASE models to structure special education support for students with disabilities. The goals of the models are to specialize the focus of evidenced based / high yield strategies, target professional development for staff based on the particular population the model serves and to create staffing structures that ensure a level of staffing students need to be successful and staff require to be productive. Here are a list of the common BASE program models with brief descriptions of each.

#### **ABASE (Autism - Building Appropriate Supports with Evidence)**

The A-BASE program is designed for students with Autism that are receiving core academic instruction on grade level standards in the regular education environment. A teacher and team of autism assistants, specially trained in evidenced based practices, creates a support system through the modification of the educational environment, communication systems, and delivery of instruction to ensure a meaningful educational experience for students grades K-12. This school based team is supported through on-going, job embedded professional development and consultation by an Autism Specialist who is also a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. It is important to note, this model IS NOT a self-contained classroom or program. Instead, it operates more as an intensive resource support system. This approach allows for the teacher and teaching assistants to provide direct instruction in academics, social skills and communication, as needed. The team also become advocates for the students in their care, intervening and support regular education staff and administration, should the need arise.



#### **BBASE (Behavior - Building Appropriate Supports with Evidence)**

The B-BASE program is designed for students that are experiencing behavioral challenges that result in the need for intensive intervention. The students receive core academic instruction on grade level standards in the regular education environment. A teacher and team of teaching assistants, specially trained in evidenced based practices that are grounded in William Glasser's "Choice Theory", create a support system through a needs based approach that relies on student problems solving to ensure a meaningful educational experience for students in grades K-12. This school based team is supported through on-going, job embedded professional development and consultation by a behavior specialist. It is important to note, that like ABASE, this model IS NOT a self-contained classroom or program. Instead it operates more as an intensive resource support system. This approach allows for the teacher and teaching assistants to provide direct instruction in academics and social skills as well as crisis intervention, as needed. The team supports but holds accountable the children in their care, intervening and supporting them to be the students they aim to be, whenever the needs arise.

#### **CBASE (Curriculum - Building Appropriate Supports with Evidence)**

Previously identified as the Functional Skills Programs (described below) at the elementary school level, C-BASE represent a shift in the way we think about, approach and implement supports for students who have significant challenges accessing and learning the depth and breadth of the general education curriculum. The focus of C-BASE moves away from a separate curriculum and a service model defined by the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program, and more toward an inclusive support system for students to access the general curriculum and their typically developing peers, as much as possible.

The training, practices and staffing support more inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities with an emphasis on bridging the regular education curriculum for students that demonstrate significant challenges accessing the depth and breadth of grade level standards. The goal of the CBASE services model is to create more dynamic inclusive opportunities within the general classroom and with non-disabled peers.

#### **GENERALISTS**

Students with disabilities not served in the BASE programs, receive their specialized instruction by a special education teacher, also referred to as a generalist. Special educators provide services to students with disabilities through a variety of of contexts that include but are not limited to push-in, pull-out, collaborative and resource support.

***Want to learn more about special education services in Albemarle County Schools?  
Join Kevin Kirst, Executive Director Special Education for a parent session "Covering All Our BASES"  
on March 17, 2021 at 6:30 PM for a Live (Zoom) presentation with ample time for your questions!  
REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED: [CLICK HERE!](#)***

## Golden Apple Awards

### Recognition for Outstanding Educators

Show your favorite teacher just how much you appreciate the hard work they've put into this school year and nominate them for a Golden Apple! This year, in addition to being recognized at the Golden Apple Ceremony, each teacher will receive a \$500 grant to use in the classroom.

Parents can nominate an outstanding teacher [this online form](#).

*Nominations for the Golden Apple are due by Friday, April 30.*

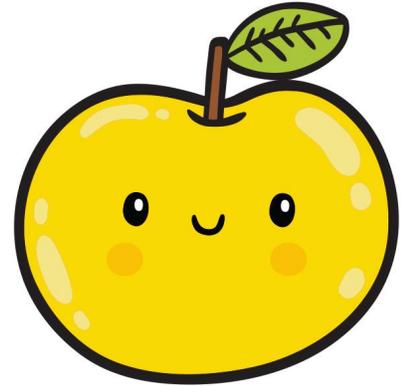
### Characteristics

Nominees should exhibit the following characteristics:

- Creates a love of learning in students of all abilities and backgrounds.
- Stimulates thought and provokes student dialogue.
- Challenges students to reach high standards and expectations.
- Understands the needs of students individually and collectively, and meets those needs with determination, enthusiasm and imagination.
- Involves families in the education process.

For more information, go to: <https://www.k12albemarle.org/our-division/golden-apple-awards>

If you have any questions about the Golden Apple Award or the process you can contact Contact Albemarle County Public Schools at 434-296-5820.



## PARENT RESOURCE CENTER PRESENTS...

Parent educational opportunities presented locally, both live and recorded.

**Tuesday, March 23, 2021**

**6:30 - 7:30 PM**

***“Covering All the BASEs: Special Education Programs in ACPS”***

***Presented by Kevin Kirst, Executive Director of Special Education and Student Services***

This session provides participants an overview of the programs available in Albemarle County Public Schools. Attention to the differences between the program models will also be discussed. There will be ample time for Questions and Answers.

**Registration:** <https://forms.gle/gXSn3VjxcCBQGxPp8>

**April 20, 2021**

**7:00 - 8:00 PM**

***“Moving Up: Best Practices for Transitioning to the Next Grade”***

***Presented by Valerie Parks, Special Education Coordinator***

This session provides some of the best practices employed by staff that have resulted in successful student transitions to the next grade (i.e. Pk to Kindergarten, Elementary to Middle, Middle to High school). Examples, as well as cases will be shared, as will tools and practices used in the division. Time will be allocated for Questions and Answers as part of the session.

**Registration:** <https://forms.gle/nS4D2DxMWndY5hPX8>

### RECORDING ARCHIVES:

***“Snap and Read: Support for Parents Helping Their Children”*** (Feb. 2021)



### Non-Discrimination Statement

Albemarle County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex, gender, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law in its programs and activities, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts of America, the Girl Scouts of the USA, and other designated youth groups.



**Contact:** (434) 296-5885



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**Website:** <https://www.k12albemarle.org/our-departments/special-education/prc>