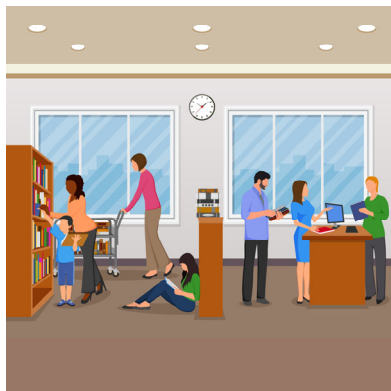


Parent Resource Center Newsletter

JMRL COLLECTION GROWING

Albemarle County Public Schools' Parent Resource Center continues its collaboration with the Jefferson Madison Regional Library (JMRL) during the 2021-2022 school year. The Parent Resource Center's Special Book Collection, which is available for to all families at any of the JMRL Branches, has new titles and accessible formats this Fall. This special collection is made up of book titles on topics related to individuals with disabilities, children and their families. The collection is specially designed for parents, providing educational books for those wanting to learn more about specific disabilities. However, we are also excited that the collection also includes titles for younger readers that promote inclusion and the celebration of diversity.



There is now 110 titles for families in this collection, with some titles having multilingual versions! To increase accessibility, we now have 43 E-book titles available through the application Overdrive or Libby, depending on your platform preference. This project has been very popular as evidenced by a search of the titles and the number that are checked out.

This [link/catalog search](#) takes you to directly to the list of all of the titles. If you are reading this as a hard copy visit www.jmrl.org and enter "ACPS Parent Resource Center" in the search bar for a full listing.



You can contact
Michael Armstrong,
Parent Resource
Center facilitator at
(434) 296-5885

Special Education Advisory Committee

Next meeting:
Tuesday, November 9,
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

[Online Live
Streaming](#)

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“Focusing on the mental health needs of all students, individuals with training on de-escalation techniques, an emphasis on trauma-informed care and a respect and practice grounded in equity, this program will provide a more welcoming school climate.

The Student Safety Coaches will concentrate on helping establish a safe educational environment and focus on mental health, de-escalation, restorative justice, and safe physical interventions. Their goal will lie in cultivating trusting relationships with students so that they can avert and mitigate behavior issues

Student Safety Coaches are employees of the ACPS. They are unarmed and have no authority to carry firearms or arrest individuals for security breaches in the performance of their duties.”

- Adopted 2021-2022 Budget

STUDENT SAFETY COACHES

In an effort to emphasize relationships, problem solving and support in Albemarle County Public Schools, the Albemarle County School board has not renewed the School Resource Officer program, provided by Albemarle County Police and has redirected those funds to a new way, providing Student Safety Coaches to each of the middle and high schools. The Department of Student Services focuses its efforts on the safety and security of students, staff and community within the context of Albemarle County Public Schools. A big part of that is the social and emotional wellness of ACPS students. *“Students learning at their highest potential begins with feeling safe in school, having confidence in relationships with other students and adults, and looking forward to being in class every day.”* said Debora

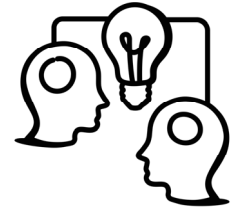
Collins, the division’s Deputy Superintendent.

Dr. Jesse Turner currently serves as the Director of Student Services.

He oversees the division’s new student safety coaches, who are focused on identifying and using best practices for student, employee, and school visitor safety and security.

“We have an opportunity to reimagine how we support student’s social and emotional learning needs to complement the academic achievement we know they’re capable of,” Bursley Middle School Principal Kasaundra Blount said. “So this new position is designed specifically for that reason.”

[Visit NBC29 for more information.](#)



ANONYMOUS ALERTS

Anonymous Alerts is an anti-bullying app and safety reporting system. It is simple, secure and enables students to quickly report incidents related to bullying, cyberbullying, or any issue regarding safety and security which may warrant immediate attention by school officials. Anonymous Alerts encourages those who feel vulnerable or less confident to speak up without fear of reprisal and report it. For more info visit www.anonymousalerts.com



BULLYING PREVENTION IN ACPS

Although October was National Bullying Prevention Month, bullying prevention is a year round goal for ACPS. Director of Student Services, Dr. Jesse Turner, discusses some of the steps our school community can take to work together to stand up against bullying. This short [video](#) was created to share what bullying is, as well as how we can all work together to address it.



If a child is experiencing bullying or any issue related to safety and security they are encouraged to reach out to a teacher or staff member they are comfortable talking to. However, it is recognized that sometimes, students do not feel comfortable sharing concerns. ACPS provides access to an electronic reporting app call Anonymous Alerts that is available to students report incidents to school administration anonymously, allowing school staff to address issues immediately. Each child’s computer has the application uploaded onto it. Anonymous Alerts is also available wherever you download apps.

GETTING YOUR CHILD COMFORTABLE WITH WEARING A MASK: ACPS AND VIA COLLABORATION

Albemarle County Public Schools continues to engage in efforts to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 in accordance with the guidance from the Virginia Department of Health and the Federal Center for Disease Control. According to the CDC, individuals with disabilities are more likely than those without disabilities to have chronic health conditions. Studies have shown that some individuals with certain disabilities are more likely to get COVID-19 and have worse outcomes. Albemarle County Public Schools encourages all staff, students and families to utilize all mitigation efforts to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

One of the reasons Albemarle Schools has been able to protect the health of our students and staff is utilizing mitigation measures, including the wearing of face masks in school.

While face coverings are required in school as per School Board Policy, it is recognized this can be a strange and even difficult experience for some children. Albemarle County Public Schools has partnered with the Virginia Institute of Autism (VIA) to address this issue.

Dr. Ethan Long, President and CEO of VIA, reached out to Kevin Kirst, Executive Director of Special Education and Student Services with the idea of collaboratively addressing the issue through video and in person support services. Immediately, the partnership launched



as VIA and ACPS assembled a videographer, staff, and families to bring the project to fruition. Within two weeks, a short video was produced, demonstrating how children could be supported to develop and increase their tolerance for mask wearing. The video can be found at: <https://youtu.be/2OxbaJwxVhM>

Their project didn't end there. The Virginia Institute of Autism offered live and in person one hour clinics for children with disabilities experiencing difficulties wearing a face covering in school. The individualized clinics were facilitated by VIA Board Certified Behavior Analysts. The cost of the clinics were funded by Albemarle County Public Schools, free to interested parents of children with disabilities enrolled in Albemarle County Public Schools.

Collaboration with VIA will continue as we explore how our two organizations can work together to help keep all of our families and students safe and in school this year.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ENCOUNTERS: AUTISM SPECIALISTS



Megan Atthowe, Jared Walding, Emily Wampler, Lauren Rothgeb

The Albemarle County Autism Specialists are Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs). BCBAs receive extensive graduate level training in applied behavior analysis.

Applied behavioral analysis uses scientific and systematic processes to help influence student behavior. Megan, Jared, Emily and Lauren support students and staff in all Albemarle County Public Schools. They specialize in autism, and developmental disabilities.

The Autism Specialists also facilitate training for Instructional and Autism Assistants, ensuring all our staff have the skills necessary to support children with autism and developmental disabilities. They also provide non-violent crisis intervention training to all special education staff.



Albemarle County Schools “Making Connections” aims to help students with trauma

NBC29

Expanding Student Mental Health Services and Support:

k12albemarle.org

Albemarle County Public Schools work to help ease anxiety as students come back to school

NBC29

New Staff Provide Student Support at WAHS

Crozet Gazette

Albemarle County schools implement new innovations for first day of school

NBC29

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS

At the preschool level, the HighScope curriculum promotes development of pro-social behaviors and skills, focusing on key areas of social learning that build children’s competence and self-awareness and help them begin to understand how to regulate their behavior and responses.

In elementary schools, the Responsive Classroom program focuses on students’ social-emotional learning, recognizing that children’s development of social skills and maturation in the classroom is as important as their development of academic skills, and that discipline is learned behavior that needs to be taught in the classroom.

In middle and high schools, Restorative Practices are integrated into the classrooms, giving students the opportunity to learn the effects of their actions through carefully orchestrated circles, conversations, and conferences. These practices contribute to students’ social and emo-

tional development by teaching them valuable skills in building and repairing relationships with their classmates, teachers, family, and community. Restorative Practices keep students in school, learning, rather than removing them for suspension or expulsion, and they provide a process for inviting those students who are sent to an alternative school back into their home school in a way that strengthens both them and the larger community.

Mental health counselors in the middle and high schools work with students who have been disciplined for classroom behavior and students who report difficulty with peers or teachers. These counselors have been trained to use Motivational Interviewing, a counseling method that focuses on positive reinforcement and students’ self-motivation as strategies for changing problem behavior.

[Adapted from original publication at: www.positiveschooldiscipline.promotepr event.org/](http://www.positiveschooldiscipline.promotepr event.org/)

SUPPORTS: IT’S NOT JUST FOR THE KIDS

While Albemarle County Public Schools priority and focus is on the education and support of children, we also recognize that adults and families are not immune to crisis and stress.

Be Well Albemarle, the county employee support program, notes that “1 in 5 individuals experiences a mental illness in a given year. With the recent pandemic, half of adults in the US

have struggled with their mental health.”

The community has compiled a list of resources for families facing all types of stressors. Click the icon above, for a list of resources or ask your school counselor for the latest “[Street Sheet](#)”.



PARENT RESOURCE CENTER PRESENTS

PARENT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED
LOCALLY, BOTH LIVE AND RECORDED.

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

6:30 - 7:30 PM

“Covering All the BASEs:

Special Education Program Models 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/BTe3NnDjdrmcxm287>

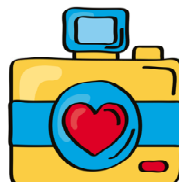
Wednesday, January 12 and 26, 2022

6:30 - 7:30 PM

**“Positive Behavioral Interventions
at Home”**

These sessions provide participants an overview of Choice Theory (used in ACPS - BBASE Programs), and how such principles can be put in to action at home, supporting parents in helping children be the people we hope they will be, now and in the future.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/sTULdLYWP4rmee647>



Tuesday, January 18, 2022

6:30 - 7:30 PM

“The ABCs of Behavior”

This session provides participants an overview of the Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence framework for understanding of behavior (used in our ABASE models) and how understanding the ABCs can be put into action at home to parents in helping children be the people we hope they will be, now and in the future.

Registration: <https://forms.gle/L6vrMUiAezB56nzc7>



PRC RECOMMENDS...

Critical Decision Points

An Online Resource (Guide and Video Modules)

<https://www.imdetermined.org/resource/critical-decision-points/>

This resource includes a guide created by the **Virginia Board for People with Disabilities**, to assist in helping families make decisions at critical points in their child’s education. It includes videos to help explain some components of the guidance document, which is available for download on the website once you move into the module.



PREVIOUSLY
RECORDED
“PRC PRESENTS”

**“Snap and Read:
Support for Parents
Helping Their
Children”**

Text to Speech Assis-
tive Technology on eve-
ry ACPS Laptop!
(Recorded Jan. 2021)

**“CO-WRITER:
Speech to Text Sup-
port for Parents
Helping Their
Children”**

Supportive assistive
technology to help kids
with the writing
process.
(Recorded Feb. 2021)

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.



Albemarle County Public Schools Parent Resource Center

Albemarle County Parent Resource Center is our 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.



**Albemarle County
Public Schools
Parent Resource Center
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Charlottesville, VA 22901**

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Email:
spedhelp@k12albemarle.org

PLEASE
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