

Community Q&A

Part 4 – Posted Thursday 3/5/26

- (1) Expenditures on Technology are \$14.3M (p. A-26), which is 6.6% of total expenditures (both School Fund & Special Revenues). That includes: School Fund: Department of Technology expenses of almost \$7.5 million (p. E-35). And, Special Revenues: Technology Equipment Replacement (F-15), which totals \$3.7M.**

The graphic on page A-26 of the draft budget shows that Technology is 4.2% of total expenditures. The 6.6% number in the pie chart reflects the percentage of Transportation expenditures.

(2) What is the other \$3.1M for Technology not in the School Fund or Special Revenues?

Under the *Technology function*, which is \$14,258,299 in expenditures for all School Fund and Special Revenue Funds, the costs are budgeted as follows:

- *Technology function* expenses budgeted in School Fund 62115–Department of Technology, totaling \$9,873,549, comprised of:
 - Salary & benefit costs for staff in school-based budgets: \$3,172,764
 - Salary & benefit costs for staff for department-based budgets: \$4,472,477
 - Operational costs: \$2,228,308
- *Technology function* expenses budgeted in other areas totaling \$4,384,750, comprised of:
 - Special Revenue Fund 63228–VPSA Technology (p. F-34) \$674,000
 - Special Revenue Fund 63907–Technology Replacement (p. F-15) \$3,697,750
 - School Fund 69998–Non–Departmental (for VERIP) \$13,000

(3) Does ACPS track comparable data from other school divisions about whether ACPS Technology expenditures (% , total & staff/equipment/services) are reasonable? We see 28 FTE in the Dept of Technology, plus new operating costs including contract services etc, which seems high knowing that there are also school-based tech support & Learning Tech Integrators.

Please note that the overall technology budget is not limited to technology used in classroom instruction. The budget includes funding all technology systems necessary for the secure and efficient operation of the ACPS school division. The funding in technology is essential to the security of student records, continuity of communication across the division, and to bolster against the ongoing cyber threats that continue to target local community data systems. That said, yes, ACPS compared technology expenditures and they are well within the expected costs.

Below are links to each of the FY26 budgets for ACPS and the Strategic Competitive Markets identified on page C-14 of the draft ACPS budget. We reviewed these budget documents and found that the technology expenditures for these jurisdictions range from 2.7% to 4.7% of their adopted

budget. So, Albemarle County Public Schools technology investment is on par with these jurisdictions.

FY2026 Budget Documents of those in the Strategic Competitive Market

- Albemarle County Public Schools: [FY2026 Adopted Budget \(PDF\)](#)
- Alexandria City Public Schools: [FY2026 Budget Portal](#)
- Arlington Public Schools: [FY2026 Adopted Budget \(PDF\)](#)
- Augusta County Public Schools: [Finance & Budget Information](#)
- Charlottesville City Public Schools: <https://charlottesvilleschools.org/budget>
- Chesterfield County Public Schools: [Budget Portal](#)
- Fauquier County Public Schools: [Budget Information Portal](#)
- Hanover County Public Schools: [Budget & Finance Department](#)
- Henrico County Public Schools: [Finance & Budget Portal](#)
- Montgomery County Public Schools: [Financial Services](#)
- Prince William County Public Schools: [FY2026 Proposed Budget Book \(PDF\)](#)
- Rockingham County Public Schools: [Finance Department](#)
- Spotsylvania County Public Schools: [Financial Services & Budget](#)
- Virginia Beach City Public Schools: [Budget & Financial Services](#)
- Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools: [Financial Services](#)
- York County School Division: [Budget & Finance](#)

(4) Replacement Q – How many laptops at which grade levels are being replaced in the current budget year? We know ACPS has a 1:1 ratio of laptops to students in grades 3-12 both for instructional use and testing.

Student laptop orders are based on enrollment projections for grades 3, 6, and 9, which is when students receive new laptops. We also need to build in extra to be ready for additional students and unplanned for replacements of student devices. This purchase for students will actually be for the 27-28 school year due to when we must purchase, so the predictions are just that - predictions to cover potential enrollment changes. The projected numbers will be adjusted as we get into the 26-27 school year.

(5) State funding for Gifted Education (p B-10 and B-12) is increasing slightly, but provides funding for only one full-time equivalent position per 1000 students (\$317K). The ACPS staffing ratio provides for more (p G-10). What is the total expenditure on Talent Development K-12, and how much is funded via state vs. local money?

Total budgeted expenditures for Talent Development is \$2.7M, the majority of which is to fund 25.0 Teacher FTEs. State funding is \$317K, so the remaining \$2.4M is funded locally.

(6) As a follow up to the comparison between the Brownsville Elementary and Crozet Elementary budgets, there was a statement at last week's school board meeting that Brownsville centrally hosts special education services for the Western feeder pattern. Could you please provide counts of how many K-5 students attend Brownsville to receive special education services but are zoned for Crozet, Ivy, and Murray elementary schools?

ECSE = Early Childhood Special Education

A-BASE = Autism Supports

B-BASE = Behavioral Supports

C-Base = Curriculum Supports

2025-2026 (actual as of March 2026)

| | Programs at Brownsville Elementary School | Programs at Crozet Elementary School |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Brownsville residents | 5 ECSE 13 A-BASE 8 B-BASE 5 C-BASE | |
| Crozet residents | 3 ECSE 2 C-BASE | 6 A-BASE |
| Ivy residents | | 1 A-BASE |
| Greer residents | 1 ECSE 1 C-BASE | |

2026-2027 (projection as of March 2026)

| | Programs at Brownsville Elementary School | Programs at Crozet Elementary School |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Brownsville residents | 3 ECSE 13 A-BASE 9 B-BASE 5 C-BASE | |
| Crozet residents | 2 ECSE 3 A-BASE 2 C-BASE | 5 A-BASE |

- Students who may not be at their base school when there is a program located there (i.e. generalists, A-BASE, C-BASE etc.) could be for reasons such as:
 - Change of venue request from a parent

- Program at current base school is full at the time
 - Could be from a move in from another school in the middle of the year
 - Newly found eligible students
- When there is capacity at the student's base school for the upcoming year, the following considerations taken are:
 - How long the student has been attending their current placement (i.e. 4th or 5th grader) and what impact that may have if moved
 - IEP team discussions are held (including parent)
 - Sibling attends another BASE program at that school.
 - An example of this would be a student who requires A-BASE may be at Brownsville because their sibling requires C-BASE and is already attending Brownsville so the parent chooses to keep siblings together and there is capacity to implement at Brownsville)

(7) Is there guidance from the division not to provide transportation for arts trips, just for athletics? Or to prioritize athletics? We're heard of ACPS transportation being cancelled and arts trips seeking unexpected funding from outside orgs for charter buses (\$3K), for example.

Historically, Activity drivers were added to support Athletics trips. There are currently only 3 Activity drivers who can do field trips any time of the day. Our regular home to school drivers can only do field trips between the hours of 9:15 and 1:45 because they are doing home to school before and after that time. We do not have enough Activity drivers to support all of the requests for trips and many schools utilize charter buses, vans, or outside organizations to support transportation. If a driver is assigned to an arts/academic trip, they are not reassigned to an athletic trip once they are promised for that trip.

There has been a push for first-come, first-served recently, but we have not adopted that standard. To do so would require far more activity drivers or guidance from the school division as to which will get priority with the limited drivers available.

To provide more clarity, we are typically able to support most trips between 9:15 - 1:45 and we can support the trips that occur on the weekends. The challenge is when trips need to leave between 6-9am Monday through Friday or 2-5pm because our drivers are completing their home to school routes. In the 24-25 school year, we completed 3046 Activity trips using 5309 buses. This school year, we have already completed 1460 (through 2/20/26) using 2065 buses. Spring is our busiest time.

(8) HS Athletics Operations – We also find “Athletics Operations” totaling \$162,000 per comprehensive high school (p G-29), which we believe is also supplemented by significant parent donations via Booster Clubs, admissions fees, etc. What does the

“Athletics Operations” amount include? Not clear on the distinction between operations & capital expenses for athletics, nor where any analysis of facilities & maintenance can be found.

The allocation of \$162K for each of the comprehensive high schools is budgeted in the following categories:

- Educ. & Recreation Supplies \$40,000
- Contract Services \$40,000
- Miscellaneous Expenses \$40,000
- Security Services \$22,000
- Field Trips \$10,000
- Uniforms & Apparel \$10,000

Actual expenses incurred would be recorded in the most precise account code available, which may differ from these initial allocations. This \$162K budgeted per high school is unrelated to donations, fees or event-generated revenue.

Capital planning information is available on the [Capital Projects page](#), and details specific to athletics in the latest [Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee \(LRPAC\) report](#) (pages 16, 20, 24, 42 & 43).

(9) What portion of the \$7.8M total Compensation Increase is allocated to non-bargaining unit employees?

The budgeted FTEs increased since the determination of the \$7.8 M cost. Using the current, higher staffing basis in the budget, the non-bargaining unit employees compensation increase cost is \$1.2M. This is inclusive of other benefit cost changes (i.e., FICA, VRS).

(10) SEL Coaches - Families are so grateful for mental health support in school, but also concerned about justifying on-going costs. Will there be a presentation to the school board summarizing data on their efficacy? In the Overview (p A-41), they are listed as for review in 2024-25 by Kevin Kirst based on the following Outputs:

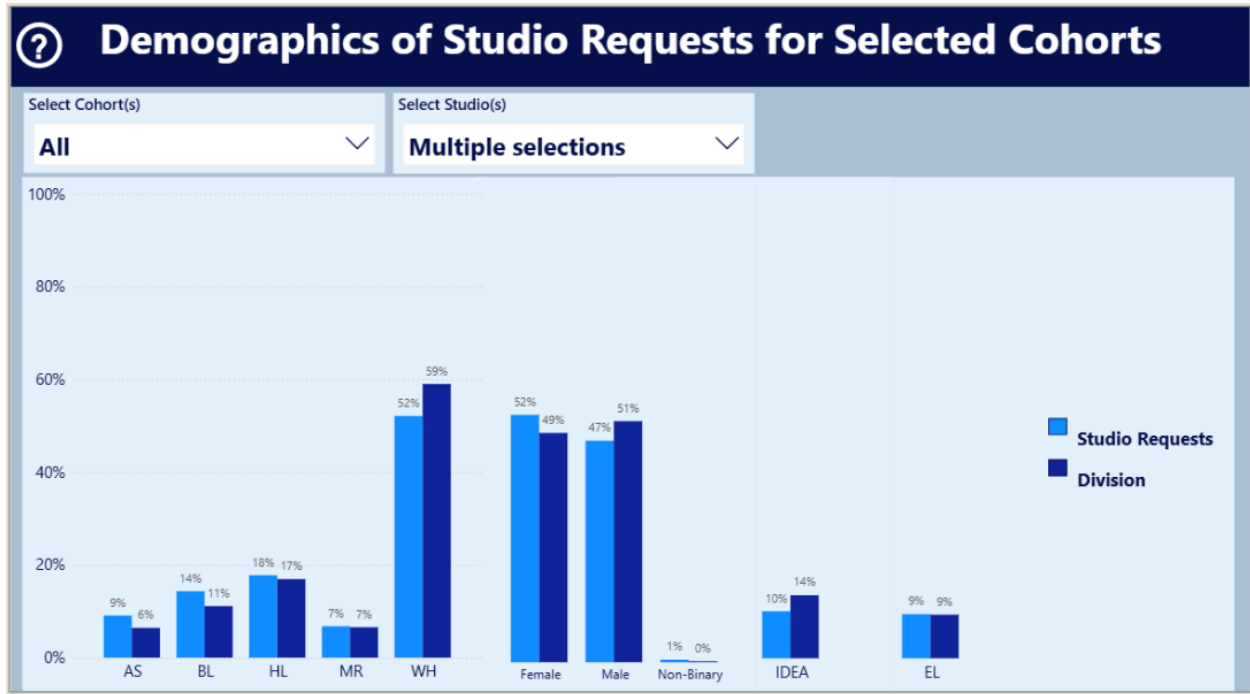
OUTPUTS: The following short-term SMART goals will help demonstrate successful implementation of the Proposal, as measured in June 2025:

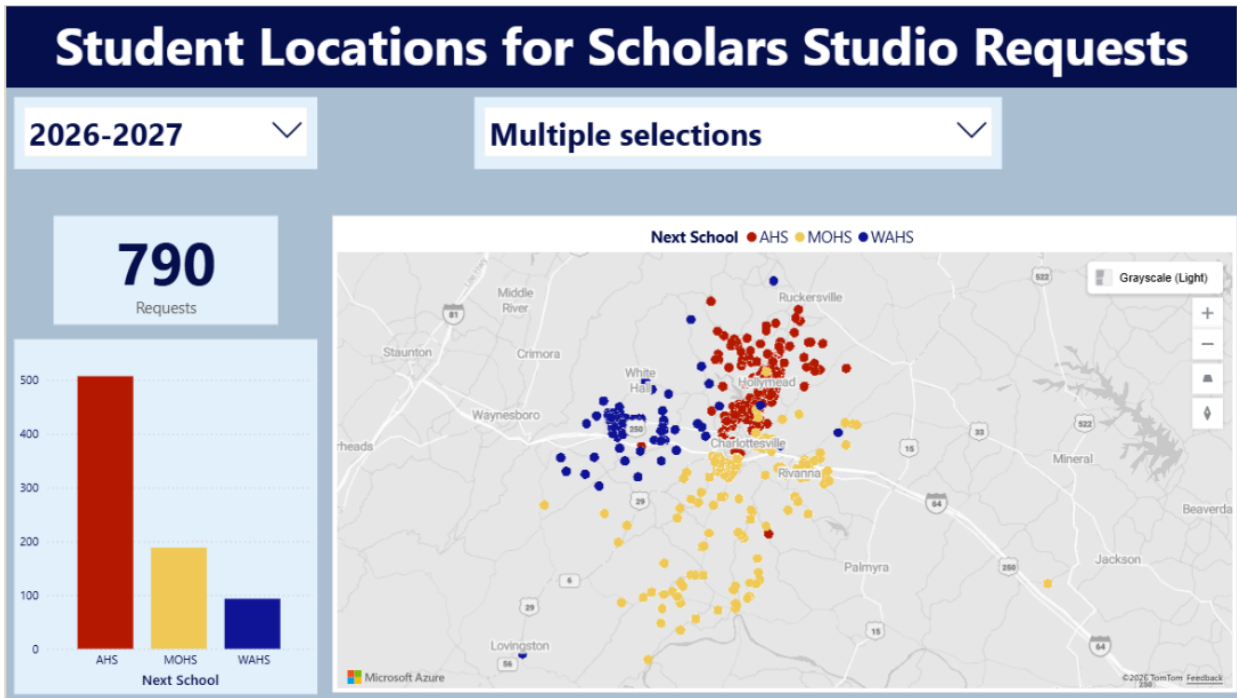
- A 10% decrease in out-of-school suspensions compared to the baseline.
- A 10% increase in students feeling a sense of belonging as indicated on the Panorama survey.
- Improved academic performance and reduced chronic absenteeism among students receiving SEL support.
- A 10% decrease in students requiring social-emotional skills instruction.

Yes, based on if and when the School Board would like to schedule.

(11) Scholar Studios (continued from Part One) – We would appreciate an update on the demographics of students who are currently registered for Scholar Studios. Both %s and actual numbers of students. It appears that the staffing is based on an assumption of student population that meets the average ACPS demographics (p G-28).

Demographics based on registration for 2026-27





This will be discussed in Work Session #3.

(12) Center for Learning and Growth – How many students does this program serve? We see 20 “Centers Students” listed (p G-34), but are they actually enrolling in the Scholar Studios or is this meant to indicate something else?

Approximately 18 students a year. They are pulled out in a different column because they are counted in their base school enrollment. They are not attending Scholar Studios.

(13) The budget (pp G-24-26) proposes an increase of 0.5 FTE, which is a decrease in teachers and an increase of a new School Security Officer. Has the program’s restorative approach changed?

The restorative approach has not changed. The SSO is trained in restorative practices, in addition to security protocol. Their inclusion in the program is evidenced by their building relationships with students and staff, promoting effective social emotional skills, wellness and crisis intervention. This person, while solidly based at the Center for Learning and Growth, also serves the entire Trailhead campus when SSO services are needed (i.e. security concerns or crisis situations).