

Community Q&A

Part 6 – Posted Thursday 3/26/26

(1) Are FTEs actually being taken from the three larger high schools and given to ACE Academy Lambs Lane, or are the teaching positions at ACE Academy Lambs Lane considered additional "new" positions to ACPS?

It's a combination. We are moving 18 FTEs from base school to ACEL as part of the shift in enrollment (no net division-wide change overall). We are also adding about 11 new FTEs to be able to provide the Scholars Studios programming (Scholars Studio proposal).

(2) Is ACE Academy Lambs Lane only having English and History as core classes, similar to ACE Academy Seminole Place?

The programs have Scholars English and Scholars History Classes. None requires additional core classes. However, we will likely be able to run some core classes as "electives" for students who attend ACEL. We are working to respond to student requests and those aren't final, but Biology is a class ACEL will likely run as they will have multiple Bio certified teachers in Pulse Studio and it will give 10th graders schedule flexibility at their base school if they want to take Band, a World Language, Math, and Health/PE for Drivers Ed as their 4 base school classes for instance.

(3) Are internal transfer requests and/or RIFed staff getting priority for the ACEL positions?

Internal communications sought teachers interested in being considered for transfer to ACEL. Those responding went through a screening and interview process. It is possible some positions will have to be filled externally due to endorsements required. We have been focusing on transfer requests and all full-time non-one year hire teachers on the RIF list have been sent to the Principal for an interview. Principals and central office are working together to avoid unnecessary RIFing in a time we are adding positions.

(4) With enrollment relatively stable, what factors justify a nearly 10% budget increase this year?

The 9.5% operating budget increase is outlined and described in Section A of the budget document. The following are the most significant drivers:

- \$2.9M in baseline adjustments, including the cost of the Calendar Year 26 health care rates
- \$1.2M in non-discretionary increases, including inflation and Calendar Year 27 health care rates
- \$4.3M in new costs to staff new schools
- \$11.8M in workforce investments tied to compensation increases and the Collective Bargaining Agreement
- \$4.1M in a proposed transfer to school capital programs

- \$3.2M in new proposals

(5) What measurable improvements in student outcomes are expected from the additional spending?

New program outcomes are described in Section A of the budget book p. A-37 and p. A-39.

(6) How many employees work in central administration compared to classroom instruction?

Teachers: 1,395 (includes Classroom teachers, speech pathologists, school counselors, instructional coaches, and librarians)

Other Administrators: 49 (includes Division leaders and other exempt personnel at or above pay grade 18)

Source: 2025 Human Resources annual report

(7) What is the total cost of administrative salaries and benefits above the principal level?

Principal positions are classified in pay grades 24 and 25. The FY 27 budgeted salary & benefit cost for positions pay grade 26 and up is \$3,313,833.

(8) Why are teaching assistant positions being reduced while administrative roles and programs are expanding?

Administrative roles are decreasing, and instructional programs are proposed to be expanded.

(9) What percentage of the new spending goes directly into classrooms?

There is no way to specifically calculate a percentage of new spending "directly into classrooms." Our budget is based on the costs necessary to achieve the School Board's goals through specific programs and services that collectively support each student.

However, as can be found on D-10 and E-3, \$224,420,857 (72.1%) of the FY 27 budget is School-based budgets, and \$86,896,300 (27.9%) is allocated to Department-based programs and services. Additional information around this can be found in [School Board Q & A #2](#), question 15.

All new proposals in FY 27 (A-34 to A-39) and continuing proposals (A-33) benefit classrooms directly. These include the new proposals for Math & Data Support Specialists for \$706,653 and Special Education Services for \$325,531, as well as the continuing Scholars Studios Sustainability (Classroom Teacher Staffing) for \$1,395,985 and Bellwether Implementation (Textbook Purchases) for \$800,000.

(10) How much of the compensation increase goes to teachers versus administrative staff?

Using the current FY 27 Funding Request staffing basis in the budget:

- For the Licensed collective bargaining unit which represents all teacher positions, the amount is \$4.7 M
- For non-bargaining unit employees (see [Community O & A #2](#), Q11 for group details), the amount is \$1.2 M (see also [Community O & A #4](#), Q9)

(11) How much has administrative staffing grown over the past five years compared to classroom teachers?

Teachers: FY 22 Actual to FY 27 Proposed Change: +129

Department-based Positions (excluding Transportation & Building Services): FY 22 Budget to FY 27 Proposed Change: +11

(12) What oversight exists to ensure facilities spending remains efficient and accountable?

Facilities spending in Albemarle County Public Schools is subject to multiple layers of oversight to ensure funds are used efficiently and responsibly:

1. All capital and maintenance projects follow established procurement policies and state purchasing requirements, which require competitive bidding or proposals depending on the project type. This helps ensure that work is awarded fairly and provides the best value for taxpayers.
2. Projects are overseen by the Building Services Department in coordination with architects, engineers, and third-party inspectors who verify that work is completed according to contract requirements, industry standards, and applicable building codes.
3. The division monitors facility operational and capital spending against recognized industry benchmarks. National facility management organizations generally recommend annual maintenance funding in the range of 2–4% of a building portfolio's Current Replacement Value (CRV). Albemarle County Public Schools' funding level has been relatively consistent over the last several years. ACPS operational and capital spending was 2.3% of CRV in 2023, 2.2% of CRV in 2025 and is projected to average approximately 2.3% of CRV over the next 5 years, placing the division near the lower end of the recommended range while still supporting responsible long-term maintenance of facilities.
4. Facilities spending is reviewed through the School Division's annual budget process and Capital Improvement Program, both of which are presented publicly and subject to School Board oversight and community input.

These procurement controls, professional oversight, benchmarking practices, and public transparency help ensure that facilities investments are managed responsibly and with careful stewardship of taxpayer resources.

(13) How are the new math and data support specialist positions different from existing instructional support roles?

A math specialist is a teacher that has obtained a specific license that allows them to provide key support for students and classroom teachers in the area of math. This position can support the implementation of mathematical content through the usage of scientifically-based research in the teaching and learning of mathematics. Math specialists can help teachers and administrators use diagnostic and assessment tools to obtain data that will allow teachers to shift their instructional practice in response to student needs. The school-based math specialist can support job embedded professional learning for staff as well as assist children who may need small group or direct support to close learning gaps in the area of math.

Other positions such as Instructional Coaches are generalists that provide job-embedded professional development, such as modeling lessons, co-teaching, observing classrooms, providing feedback, and analyzing student data across content areas. While these supports have training in best pedagogical practices, they are not designed to support only one content area.

(14) What measurable results will determine whether these new positions continue in future budgets?

New program outcomes are described in Section A of the budget book p. A-37 and p. A-39.

(15) Why are new programs being introduced while classroom support positions are being reduced?

New programs are being introduced in order to provide more classroom support.

(16) What portion of the budget increase is tied to new facilities versus instructional improvements?

\$4.1M in operational funding is proposed to be transferred to the school capital projects. \$3.2M in operational funding is proposed for instructional improvements.

(17) What cost-saving measures were considered before proposing this level of spending increase?

These are the cost-savings measures implemented and proposed over the last three years:

FY25 – \$2.6M	FY26 – \$6.1M
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher FTE — \$1.9M Class size increase; Elementary Foreign Language Program • Department FTE — \$0.5M • Assistant Principal Intern Program — \$0.2M 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher FTE — \$2.4M Elementary Foreign Language Program; National Defense Cadet Corps; Class size increase; Freshman Seminar; Physical Education; Media Specialist; STEP; Intervention • Furniture Replacement Program — \$1.2M
FY27 – \$0.4M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional Coach FTE — \$1.1M
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Teaching Assistant FTE — \$0.4M 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department FTE — \$1.0M • Field Experiences (partial reduction) — \$0.4M

FTE = Full-Time Equivalent position (staffing)

(18) What steps are being taken to prioritize direct classroom instruction in budget decisions?

Our priority in every budget decision is to ensure that ACPS is a safe space where students learn, grow, and develop. Instruction is the greatest cost and consumes 70% of the budget. This proposed budget places particular emphasis on attracting and retaining quality teachers, because the quality of instruction is directly related to the quality of teachers in our classrooms. Many of the other budget categories have a direct impact on classroom instruction. Technology includes the devices for students as well as classroom technology equipment to strengthen learning. Building services focuses on maintaining clean and healthy environments where students can better learn. Administration services focus on the management of both classroom and non-classroom activities of school operations so that teachers can focus on instruction.

(19) How does administrative spending compare to similar school divisions in Virginia?

It is in line with similar school divisions in Virginia. However, we continue to analyze this during each budget process.

(20) What long-term plan exists to control administrative growth?

ACPS develops a zero-base budget approach in each budget cycle. That means we look at each part of the budget to make certain there is no shift in the staffing or funding necessary to meet the explicit goals of the School Board. This includes looking at administrative services to provide programs and services necessary to operate the school division effectively and efficiently. So, the budget process assures a long-term plan that emphasizes continuous quality improvement; identifying efficiencies; and reviewing the need, value, and progress of specific programs and services. This allows us to control unnecessary growth (administrative or otherwise) during each budget development cycle.

(21) How will taxpayers be assured that future budgets focus primarily on student instruction rather than expanding bureaucracy?

We provide a transparent budget process where we specify how tax dollars are utilized and address public inquiries about the ACPS budget directly. We encourage the public to review our budget and bring their concerns and interests forward. The focus is always on the programs and services offered to meet the needs of our students.