

Albemarle Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
Minutes of Monthly Meeting - Tuesday, March 10, 2026
County Office Building, Room 320

Agenda

1. Call to Order - 6:30 pm
2. Approval of Agenda - approved
3. Approval of Minutes from Feb. meeting - approved
4. Attendance and Introductions
 - a. SEAC Members
 - Jessica Allen - Ivy ES / Co-Chair
 - Chris Seaman - Henley MS / Co-Chair
 - Kate Gariepy - Albemarle HS
 - Betsey Soulsby - Community Representative
 - Nicole Group - Western Albemarle HS / Co-Secretary
 - Tonya Evans - Community Representative
 - Dee Curry - Scottsville ES / Vice Chair
 - Jessica Willard - Stone-Robinson ES
 - Amanda Vogel - Baker Butler ES
 - Sam Peacoe - Burley MS / Co-Secretary
 - Caitlin Foley (via Zoom) - Mountain View ES
 - Matthew Fowler (via Zoom) - Hollymeade ES
 - b. ACPS Administrators and Staff
 - Dr. Chandra Hayes, Assistant Superintendent
 - Ashley Struzik, Director of Special Education
 - Leslie Glover, Assistant Director of Special Education
 - Erin Stone, Assistant General Counsel
 - Ralph Bradley, Director of Office of School Safety and Security
 - Katina Dudley, Lead Instructional Coach
 - c. Others
 - Stephanie Hicks, PREP (Piedmont Regional Educational Program)
5. Update from SEAC Leadership Team
 - a. 2026-27 Budget and Special Education: 11.8% of the draft school fund budget is related to special education, which is a substantial increase over the current year. This incorporates increases to teacher and staff compensation (including special education teachers and TAs); additions of curriculum specialist, behavioral specialist, and adaptive physical education positions. Questions were raised at previous public hearings about the differences in (overall) spending at Brownsville ES v Crozet ES - this is partly explained by differences in BASE program offerings at each school.
 - b. County Board of Supervisors: No response from Board of Supervisors on Chris' email w/SEAC resolution about facilities improvements. They have not been as supportive of ACPS during the budget process. Possible 1% sales tax would require the Board of Supervisors referendum to dedicate to school facilities.

- c. SEAC Leadership: Looking for people interested in taking on a leadership position for next school year. Chris has reached the term limit to serve as chair. Jessica is also no longer going to be in leadership. Need folks to step up.
- 6. Update from SEAC representatives on other ACPS committees
 - a. Cell Phone committee: Students trying to have a day or more than one day of no devices including laptops. Presenting to teachers after break. Walton had a day like this a few years ago (typewriters!).
 - b. Family Council: Community organizations spoke on various initiatives to support under-resourced families - looking for donations and spreading the message.
 - c. Piedmont Regional Educational Program (PREP): Family Fun Fitness night in Greene - all are welcome. Family Partners in Special Education conference on 3/28, including folks from JMU's TTAC coming + break out sessions and Q&A discussion; free and Albemarle provides snacks.
- 7. SRO Program Community Awareness Update - Ralph Bradley. Link to slide deck [here](#).
 - a. Introduction and overview of Safety Staffing and Personnel.
 - 3 employees in OSS (Director and 2 Safety and Security Coordinators).
 - 22 School Security Officers - DCJS certified, in secondary schools.
 - 3 School Resources Officers (SROs): one at each high school paid by ACPS plus 1 additional floater (assigned to middle schools) paid by ACPD but is SRO certified.
 - 8 Student Safety Coaches at secondary schools (also engaging children to try and intervene prior to escalated needs).
 - Both SSO and SSC both have school safety officer training certification. Only SROs are armed in any capacity. No projected increases at this time for any of these roles.
 - b. Crisis Management Plans, recently revised for the 25/26 year and updated as needed, signed off every August.
 - c. Crisis Response Training - ALICE training provided to all staff and all students (age based, need based).
 - d. Standard Response Protocols (responding to an incident - 5 attributes used in an emergency, all staff have a cheat sheet card with their ID badge - Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, Shelter in Place) and Standard Reunification Models (getting kids to a place where they can be managed, identified, located, and communicate with families how to get kids). Currently staff with familiarity with students with specific needs incorporated to get students through the process via drills, getting children familiar with the process and feeling capable when needing to pivot in routine.
 - e. Incident Command Training - practicing who is in charge when there is an emergency and running through that process. Incident Command Person is responsible for all decisions until help arrives (fire, police, etc). Went through table top training to teach them their roles and responsibilities. Principal or designated representative. No surprises when something happens.
 - f. Medical Response Training (CPR, and more in-depth training) and Community Emergency Response Team protocols. Identifying who in schools should have

these trainings. Such as nurses, in school security, admin, athletics, etc - who should be mandatory and who can be auxiliary. CPI training.

- g. Transportation emergencies
- h. Tabletops - mental exercises so when something happens, this isn't the first time you are thinking it through. Who do I communicate with, who do I contact, who acts while waiting for help. Special Education teachers are included in these. Everyone on the crisis team is included.
- i. Safety Audits - evaluating full buildings inside and out and addressing the concerns each year. Radio communications including how to use the radio. Crisis communications - public page that will show any active incident and will be updated at least every 30 minutes during an active incident. Also details all 5 response protocols.
 - Hold: Students and staff stay in their classroom, hallways clear. No transitions. Helps with medical emergencies and other incidents where we need to protect a person's dignity or remove possible obstacles to getting help. Used to keep people away from an impacted area.
 - Secure: Used for concern outside the building that could impact inside the building. Traffic stops in the area, animals on campus, etc. Pulls all students and staff into the building and secures the facility. Inside business as usual, monitor people leaving no one new comes in.
 - Lockdown: Only used if you have someone in your building trying to do harm. A violent threat is active or imminent. ALICE - Alert Lockdown Inform Counter Evacuate - process is initiated and students and staff are taking immediate steps to stay safe based on the situation.
 - Evacuate: For fire drills, bomb threats, etc - any reason to leave the school and get to a designated safe space.
 - Shelter: For weather event, etc - take cover for safety
- j. SROs - Only difference between SRO and regular police officer is the SRO is trained specifically and is established in the school environment and familiar with the kids. An outside officer does not have the history of the kids involved to inform their process. SROs only enforce criminal activity if requested by the school to do so. SROs are not involved in the discipline process unless it happens in their presence (ex fight takes place in front of them they intervene and hand over to admin, will get involved if at any point admin or family says they need to press charges).
- k. SRO training - through DCJS and required to have ongoing training to maintain certification. Additional training includes mental health, cultural competency, etc.
 - Update - Special Education overview and training via Ashley and made sure SROs knew the lead SpEd at the school to develop a relationship. School Safety Training Conference, Be Safe Virginia, Communicating through Crisis, Fostering Resilient Schools, Emergency Substantial Risk Orders, Legal Issues in Schools, Value of Mentors and Relationships with SROs, Decoding Autism, Departmental Legal Updates,

ALICE + more. Projected training for Cultural Competency, Crisis Intervention Program (CIP), Mentoring. Driving Safety training.

8. Family Life Education Curriculum / C-Base Workbook - Katina Dudley
 - a. 9th grade student curriculum on Family Life for C-Base students. Families will still have an option to opt out
 - b. Workbook is based on the current curriculum but has been re-designed for students to follow along. Considering making workbooks for all students based on positive encouraging feedback from teachers. Getting family feedback by April so ACPS can have this taught to the students this year.
 - c. Curriculum is scripted and must be approved by the school board before launching. More updates based on family feedback will be made. The mode of delivery is what has been adjusted, the content is intact. However, there is some feedback from parents asking for more detailed handouts (pregnancy, example). Healthy relationships hand out being added and is on the curriculum. VA is an abstinence only state, that is what ACPS has to teach. This is how pregnancy happens, don't do it. There is education about STIs and contraceptives are discussed to the best that they can be within an abstinence only framework.
 - d. Health teachers teach the curriculum, c Base teachers have the relationship - this co-working relationship is relied upon. Will not be able to address middle school or post 9th grade until this initiative is resolved.
 - e. Comments from SEAC: Workbook needs more diverse representation of children depicted in the books, will try with the limited time to include more. Concern for kids online, is going to be developed through other curriculum. Must stay in alignment with state standards but try to be as inclusive (biological sex representations, etc.) and welcome feedback on how it can be improved.
9. Update from ACPS Special Education Leadership - Ashley Struzik
 - a. Special Education Plan for 2026-2027 School Year for state submission
 - Increase in number of students receiving specialized education continues
 - Proposal adds 3 targeted special education positions (learning specialist, behavior specialist, full time adaptive PE teacher).
 - Regional Jail Agreement (CARJ) - 0.5 FTE Special Education Teacher
 - Part B Set Aside Funds for students placed in private schools by their parents, .6 FTE
 - Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS), no longer required to set aside 15% due to improvements on racial disparity
 - Federal Grant Funds
 - b. Inclusive Schools Annual Report - requires all schools to provide a new report every three years. Slide Deck linked [here](#).
 - Grounded in the principle of the least restrictive environment.
 - Core Areas for Future Work - Instructional Quality, Collaborative Planning, Master Scheduling, Social.
 - Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Handbook in process.
 - ACPS will be conducting a Special Education review with the Berkley Group to get an objective assessment of our program to identify areas we

are doing well and areas we need improvement. Staff school leaders and families will be sourced for feedback, in addition to available data. In the data sharing stage. Berkeley Group is a consulting firm that has done a lot of work with corporate entities in past years but recently has brought on an educational team familiar with working with school districts around the state in various capacities. Similar to the Bellweather Audit process. ACPS requested this, felt it was important to do now that we have a full team on board - great time to see where we are.

10. Upcoming meeting topics

- a. DARS will present virtually (Patricia Hodge) on transitions in April.
- b. Ayanna Mitchell, Director of Equity Education, in May
- c. Need to put survey instrument, more effective outreach plan on agenda for either April or May meeting
- d. Elect SEAC leadership for next year at May meeting

11. New Business

12. Public comment (in person and by email at spedhelp@k12albemarle.org).

One comment received by email:

"I am a parent of a first grade student in Crozet Elementary's A-Base program and have two continued concerns I'd like to share.

First, Crozet Elementary's A-Base special education teacher has been on maternity leave since February 28. No special education certified teacher is currently filling her role; I understand a long-term substitute is expected to start sometime in April. In the meantime, the school administrators, counselors, teachers, and teaching assistants have been working with my son, and I greatly appreciate their efforts. However, I am concerned that the school system has not staffed Crozet's A-Base program with a special education certified teacher with the formal expertise to provide these services. This inability also makes me question whether the school system could adequately staff Crozet next year if its special education needs increase. As you're aware, there are large discrepancies between the number of special education students in the Crozet attendance area compared to schools such as Brownsville with similar demographics.

Second, Crozet is budgeted in the FY27 draft to have 2 more K-5 classroom sections than Brownsville, and Crozet is projected to have 60 more K-5 students than Brownsville. That is a ratio of 30 students for each additional budgeted classroom section. Ms. Kumazawa's response is that the classroom section budget is based on each grade individually, not the total K-5 population. However, from the Crozet Gazette's March 2026 interview with Jim Kyner, Brownsville principal:

"One of the decisions Kyner credits for last year's success was creatively using his staffing allocations. Faced with a choice between smaller fifth-grade classes or reallocating one teacher, he chose to increase class sizes slightly and create a math

interventionist position for students who had fallen behind. "She took on the kids who needed the most help and really focused on them, and 100% of the kids she worked with passed," he said. "Some of them passed advanced." "

Particularly given Crozet's Off Track status, I suggest that Crozet needs opportunities to perform "creative staffing allocations", or even better, extra staffing. This is less likely if staffing is not based on the entire K-5 count. This is not intended to be an attack on Brownsville at all - instead, I'm advocating for Crozet to receive the equitable resources that it needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Michael Peck"

13. Adjournment - 8:27 pm