

Enrollment Projections Methodology

Albemarle County Public Schools · October 2026



School Board Policy FB (Facilities Planning) and its administrative procedures call for updated enrollment projections by December 1 of each year.

Under Policy FB, projections take into consideration school registration figures, forthcoming changes in planning and zoning, current and planned land development and housing projects, the latest available birth data, and an annual reassessment of school capacities.

How the projections are built

1. **Start from actual enrollment on September 30.**
2. **Project kindergarten** from births five years earlier.
3. **Move students forward one grade per year** using each school's historical cohort survival ratios.
4. **Assign students to middle and high schools** using current feeder patterns based on where students live.
5. **Project special programs separately** (Community Lab School and Post High).
Preschool is not projected.

1. Fall enrollment count (baseline)

Projections start from actual enrollment as of September 30, as recorded in PowerSchool, the student information system schools use to track registrations. These are ACPS physical student counts and may differ from enrollment reported to and verified by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). Students who are assigned to a school but served outside it (for example, Children's Services Act placements) are not included.

2. Kindergarten

Kindergarten is projected from the number of live births five years earlier, as recorded by the Virginia Department of Health, Division of Health Statistics (apps.vdh.virginia.gov/HealthStats). The average historical ratio of births to kindergarten enrollment five years later is applied to recent births.

Birth data are geocoded by the mother's residence and assigned to current school boundaries, so kindergarten is projected for each school rather than distributed from a division-wide total.

Births are known only about five years ahead of kindergarten. For projection years beyond the most recent birth data, the average of historical births in each school boundary is used.

Kindergarten drives the rest of the projection. It is the starting point for the cohort survival model, so any change in projected kindergarten carries forward into every later grade.

3. Cohort survival model

For each school, ACPS calculates historical ratios of how many students in one grade continue to the next grade the following year. For example:

$$\text{Grade 2 cohort survival ratio} = \frac{\text{Grade 2 enrollment, 2026–27}}{\text{Grade 1 enrollment, 2025–26}}$$

Ratios are calculated from historical residential data (students living in each current school boundary) rather than school registration data. This keeps the ratios consistent when boundaries change or a school opens or closes.

Because they are based on actual year-to-year changes, the ratios already reflect migration, dropouts, students held back, and transfers between public and private schools.

4. Feeder patterns

Some elementary and middle schools feed into more than one middle or high school, depending on where students live.

Using the September 30 addresses of current students, ACPS estimates how many students will attend each school in the future. For example, the number of Agnor 4th graders who will enter Burley Middle in two years is projected from the number of Agnor 4th graders who live in the Burley Middle district. Current percentage splits by grade are used to project enrollment from 5th to 6th grade and from 8th to 9th grade.

5. Programs projected separately

- **Community Lab School.** A charter school for grades 6–12 that focuses on interdisciplinary, project-based, and experiential instruction; students are selected by lottery. Projections assume 100% progression for grades 7–12 and an incoming 6th grade cohort of 30 students.
- **Post High Program.** Helps students ages 18–22 with moderate and severe disabilities move from high school to independent living through vocational training and independent-living skills. Projections are based on the individual students expected to attend.
- **Preschool (not projected).** ACPS elementary schools host several preschool programs. These are not included in enrollment projections, but preschool enrollment is used when calculating building capacity and allocating staff.