



Albemarle County Public Schools Family Council

April 2025 Meeting

Contents:

[Meeting Summary](#)

[Background Material](#)

[Meeting Minutes](#)

Meeting Summary

Happy Spring with summer-so-soon! Here's our latest [Family Council](#) update. Our April 2025 meeting featured two main topics, covered in-depth in our [Minutes](#):

- Advisory on School Resource Officers – ACPS leaders requested our input on SROs in advance of potential edits to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- Listening Homework – Our Reps shared feedback we received from families on the most important issues they're facing, which we will use to craft our survey to be sent to all families in ACPS in mid-May.

Check out the many answers we've received for family-submitted questions: [March QnA](#) and [April QnA](#). Submit your own using this form: [May Call for Qs & Comments](#).

Our Family Council has been working on electing Officers for next school year. We'll also be seeking School Representatives & At-Large Reps with specific areas of expertise... stay tuned for the official Interest Form. In the meantime, chat with your school principal or a current [Rep](#), or [get in touch directly](#). We'd love to have you join us 😊

Background Material

Shared with Reps ahead of meeting.

School Resource Officers –

- [Substack](#) – lays out history & budget proposals. (Note that the mental health & restorative justice-focused Safety Coaches are now included in the budget.)
- [FAQs from ACPS](#) – posted about an hour before the school board meeting (or at least that's when we found it).
- [ACPD Report on SRO Activity](#) – also posted just before school board meeting & linked in above FAQ.

- [Memorandum of Understanding](#) – according to school board member Rebecca Berlin, this current MOU between ACPS and the AC Police Department will be revised before the start of next school year.
- [Family Council Advocacy](#) – Feb 2024 publication summarizes the input from the group following multiple conversations during the 2022-23 school year and significant collaboration in fall 2023.
- [SEAC Resolution](#) – created following Tues Mar 11 meeting.
- [Public Comments Received](#) – will be included on the [SRO Advisory Feedback](#) sent to ACPS.

QnA Updates

- [March QnA](#) – received from ACPS.
- [April Qs to ACPS](#) – here's what we submitted.
- [April QnA](#) – received from ACPS.

Committee Updates

- [DonorsChoose](#) – Monthly report [available here](#). For next year, we will be seeking a volunteer to do social media posts (Facebook at minimum) when there are a) matches available and b) projects are expiring. The volunteer would be a “committee member”, so not required to come to each FC monthly meeting. Great opportunity for someone who wants to make teacher wishes come true, all from the comfort of your own home. Having flexibility during the daytime hours is very helpful, as this requires a quick daily check & then quick action when matches come up unannounced. Will be collaborating with Kelly McCaskill, who will continue as Committee Chair. Send email if you're interested: acpsdonorschoose@gmail.com
- Evaluation for Disabilities – Leaders of SEAC and Family Council heard the results of the UVA team's work summarizing survey data and in-depth structured interviews. Our next step is to request permission to share a subset of family quotes provided under conditions of anonymity. We will then schedule discussion with ACPS leaders & share the findings publicly via both SEAC and Family Council.

Advising Updates

- AC44 – The County government has a new long-term comprehensive plan underway in parallel to this budget season. Please visit the [AC44 website](#) and add your comments. Heidi GB found family specifics in multiple chapters posted, including: Facilities (school buildings!), Thriving Economy (childcare!), and Parks (biking & walking safety!). Additional chapters will be coming out this spring.
- Budget – The school board will officially adopt the budget for next school year on May 8 following the County Supervisors final budget. See the [ACPS Budget page](#).

Advocacy Updates

- School Buildings / CIP – Governor Youngkin once again vetoed the legislation that would have allowed Albemarle County to put a sales tax increase to the voters via referendum... so, no “Hail Mary” for school construction funding from the state.

Engagement Opportunities

- Weds Apr 30 6pm – Board of Supervisors Public Hearing on Tax Rate
- May 5 - 9 – Teacher Appreciation Week
- Thurs May 8 – School Board Meeting
- Tues May 13 – SEAC Meeting
- Weds May 14 – Health Advisory Meeting & LRPAC Meeting
- Mon May 19 – Talent Development Advisory Meeting
- Weds May 21 – Last Family Council Meeting
- Thurs May 22 – School Board Work Session (incl HS Capacity, we think)

Meeting Minutes


Date: Weds, April 16, 2025

Location: Agnor Elementary School

Time: Meeting called to order by Co-Chair Lizzie at 6:30.

Attendance: Quorum (8 voting members) was reached with 21 total reps present.

Minutes: The [Minutes from March 2025 Meeting](#) were accepted as presented.

Slides:  April 2025 Meeting Slides

Officer Updates

Officer elections - Lizzie presented candidate slate / names (final as of May 1) & gave official notice for May election.

Co-Chair – Emily Mathon

Co-Chair – Lizzie Batman

VP, Advocacy – ?

Secretary – Sam Peacoe

Treasurer – Shelly Hamler

Reps – Spring 2024 responsibilities & FAQ are on agenda, with Q on post-meeting Google Form. Will share “coming soon” publicly before May meeting, so get your photo taken & give quote pls.

Advisory Session

School Resource Officers & Safety

Darah Bonnham - speaker in place of Ralph Bradley who cancelled

Presenter Slides:  Copy of SRO Presentation to Community Groups FC

Darah is former AHS principal, teacher, (Fairfax, CATEC, Monticello, Monticello, Albemarle)
Now Program Coordinator

Craig Zatola has LEO background, also coordinator

Ralph Bradley is director

Department Mission: build relationships to create culture of safety and security to ensure safe environment for learning and growth within complain of fed and state safety codes, supporting quality and equity in district.



Safety and Security overview

Safety Staffing & Personnel	
>	Office of Safety & Security
o	Director
o	Safety and Security Coordinators (2)
>	School Security Officers (SSOs) (21)
o	School based positions, formerly School Security Assistants (TAs)
o	Reclassified to meet VDOE/DCJS certification standards
o	Assigned to each secondary school (15 HS, 5 MS, 1 CLS)
>	School Resource Officers (SRO) (1 currently, 3 proposed for 25/26 SY)
>	Additional school staff
o	Student Safety Coaches (SSC) at secondary schools (8)
o	Collective responsibility for school safety

Personnel - 3

School Security Officers SSO 21 - new this year as a role but not the people. Formerly School Safety Assistants (TAs) now reclassified to meet VDOE/DCJS cert, assigned to each secondary school (not centers). Relationship builders with kids, doors and access control, physical safety... Certified 2 year process to certification...

School Resource Officers SRO 3 proposed, 1 current, plus 1 floater maintained

Additional School Staff - Student Safety Coaches SSC 8 - at secondary schools. Brought in in absence of SROs previously and they serve joint responsibility - monitoring school safety be visible, connection between restorative work with students, close connections with admin and mental health support. Also have SSO certification. Collective responsibility among everyone in the building.

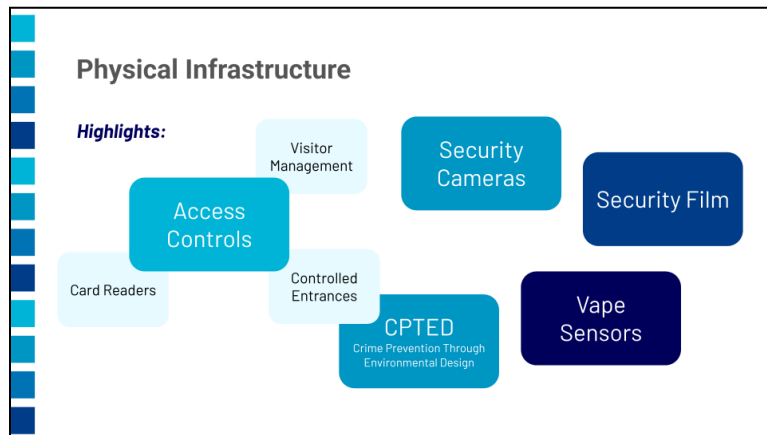
Procedures & Practices	
Crisis Management Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised template implemented for 2024/25 school year Plans are updated as needed 	Tabletop Exercises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented in October 2024 Each school will participate in multiple exercises each year Initial exercise - review CMP and conduct one practical scenario
Crisis Response Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All school-based staff have received ALICE training. Training for district staff is ongoing. Training is offered monthly by OSS Working group has been formed to determine training plan for students 	Critical Response Graphic (CRG) Mapping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical incident mapping Integrated with emergency management systems for improved responses and navigation

Crisis Plan Management, Crisis Response Training. Standardized protocols (hold, lock down, shelter in place, ALICE, etc).

Continuing to look at what ALICE training looks like for students, especially age appropriateness.

Tabletop exercises - scenario based, what does it look like if... takes place at each building with admin

Critical Response Rapid Mapping - we aren't doing this in isolation. Depend on emergency response. What entrance is this, naming locations to be common across all teams. Cannot always be prepared for the crisis but can be prepared for the response.



Access controls (getting in the buildings - car readers, visitor management, vestibules, weapons screening, controlled entrances), cameras, window security film, vape sensors, CPTED.

What is a School Resource Officer (S.R.O.)?

Code of Virginia § 9.1-101:

An SRO is a certified law enforcement officer employed by a local law enforcement agency to provide law enforcement and security services to public elementary or secondary schools. A required Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes the framework for the SRO program, defining the purposes, goals, and responsibilities of each agency involved. Its primary aim is to clearly outline the roles of both schools and law enforcement in the use of SROs, creating a mutually beneficial partnership.

<https://www.dcs.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/school-resource-officers>

School Resource Officer Program
Supported through code of Virginia 9.1-101

Difference between SRO and a police officer

- ❖ SROs are sworn police officers that primarily interact with students. The position requires an understanding of student dynamics for building trust, overcoming cultural barriers, helping foster inclusivity, and ultimately helping to build a safer and healthier school environment.
- ❖ Both police officers and SROs enforce the law, but SROs receive specialized training and play a unique role in schools as educators and mentors, ensuring a safe and supportive environment.

Difference between SRO and police officer. SRO is sworn officer but primary interest in interacting with students. Understanding of student dynamics for building trust, overcome cultural barriers etc.

Difference between SRO and a police officer		
Category	Police Officer	School Resource Officer
Primary Role	Patrol the county, respond to incidents, and enforce laws in various settings.	Work within schools to ensure student and staff safety; collaborate with administrators to maintain a secure learning environment.
Training	Receive standard law enforcement training in procedures, criminal law, and community policing.	Complete standard police training plus specialized training in adolescent psychology, de-escalation, and supporting students with special needs.
Responsibilities	Enforce laws, conduct investigations, and respond to emergencies countywide.	Follow the triad model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law enforcement officers • Educators (e.g., safety, substance abuse prevention) • Mentors/trusted adults (relationship-building, guidance, connecting to services)
School/Community Presence	Serve the broader community, including occasional school involvement.	Are integrated, active members of the school community; proactively address concerns and build rapport.

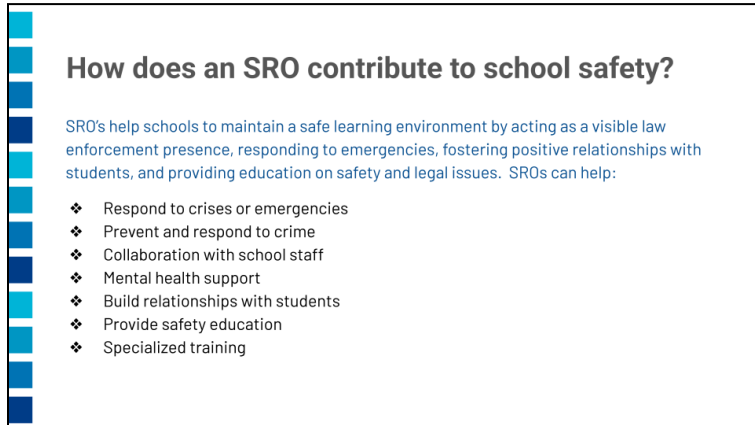
Expansion:

ACPS SRO Program Expansion

- ❖ The SRO program is designed to enhance school safety by providing a dedicated law enforcement presence in and around the servicing schools. The SROs serve to protect students, staff, and property, foster positive relationships between law enforcement and the community, and assist in crisis management, conflict resolution, and education on legal issues
- ❖ The funding request for the FY26 budget adds two SROs. One (1) is currently assigned AHS. Two (2) additional officers will be assigned to MHS and WAHS beginning in the 2025/26 school year. These additional positions ensure a consistent safety presence across all comprehensive high schools.
- ❖ [SRO FY26 Budget FAQ](#)

Darah’s personal lens: Only remembers doing fire drills at first in career. Then lockdown drills after Columbine. SROs involved. Coming back out of covid it was bad, for all of us in our kids and schools. Many factors percolating. No SROs and understanding the reason why at the time. Perspective as principal: always worried about safety and wellbeing of kids. After covid, things

were popping even more so and it was a tough year. Many things from our community spilling into the world of our schools. Community beefs spilling in, more concerned after covid. Wanted police car parked out front to keep issues out of the building. SRO doesn't solve all the issues, but presence component is there. Rampant use of vapes/e-cigs/thc devices - obligated by law as principal to call police officer to come check it out. When calling law enforcement you get any officer off the street, not the same as the person every day in the building (SRO) who potentially had relationship with kids. This is vital part that was missing when there was no SRO. Prefer person with good relationship with these kids.



How does an SRO contribute to school safety?

SROs help schools to maintain a safe learning environment by acting as a visible law enforcement presence, responding to emergencies, fostering positive relationships with students, and providing education on safety and legal issues. SROs can help:

- ❖ Respond to crises or emergencies
- ❖ Prevent and respond to crime
- ❖ Collaboration with school staff
- ❖ Mental health support
- ❖ Build relationships with students
- ❖ Provide safety education
- ❖ Specialized training

SRO contributes: crisis and emergency response, criminal activity response and prevention. Do not want the idea of police in buildings as putting kids in pathways for legal trouble that wouldn't be there if they weren't. SRO is never responsible for starting investigation. Only administrator and SSO permitted to do search with reasonable suspicion. If something is found that is illegal or potentially illegal - obligation as principal to call police call SRO and then they file report. SRO not involved in search (exception for weapon - bystander). Police with or without SRO is not different - response time and student connection as possible assist.

Q – When do families get involved in that chain of events?

Non police or criminal, like tobacco, best practice is that parent is contacted before or during search, but sometimes it happens after.

Rep: You said tobacco is different than THC i=even in minor - both illegal for minor but not for adult, treated differently?

Darah: Info is shared ACPD tobacco not writing up as other than it occurred

Rep: Willing to check person of student to look for vape if they deny vaping. Chance that you might check the student before contacting family?

Darah: There is a chance. There is a best interest to contact family first, but it is not 100% happening - circumstance.

Rep: In non violent, search of child without notification of parents. Should be standardized. Should be parents contact first every time.



SRO Training

Per [DCJS](#): The Code of Virginia [§9.1-102.54](#) directs DCJS to provide training for SROs as follows:

Establish compulsory minimum training standards for certification and recertification of law-enforcement officers serving as school resource officers. Such training shall be specific to the role and responsibility of a law-enforcement officer working with students in a school environment and shall include:

- Relevant state and federal laws;
- school and personal liability issues;
- security awareness in the school environment;
- mediation and conflict resolution, including de-escalation techniques;
- disaster and emergency response;
- awareness of systemic and individual racism, cultural diversity, and implicit bias;
- working with students with disabilities, mental health needs, substance use disorders, or past traumatic experiences; and
- student behavioral dynamics, including current child and adolescent development and brain research.

To meet this directive, the SRO Program of the DCJS' Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS) provides numerous training opportunities for both law enforcement and schools throughout the Commonwealth. DCJS offers year-round training for SROs to help them enhance their skills and better serve their communities.

SROs DCJS training requirement + our additional training: see slide

Rep: is it training and competency? Prove competency or only trained on them?

Darah: Based on what we decide. DCJS mandates competency passing. Our requirements on the additional training, we can decide.

SRO Training (cont.)

Per the current MOU:

The SRO selected shall, as soon as practicable after having been assigned, complete DCJS SRO Certification training and, at least every two (2) years, meet in-service requirements by DCJS, and complete forty (40) hours of training, by the ACPD or Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services that may include the following:

- Mental health specific training and crisis intervention training in accordance with established and certified state standards;
- Disability awareness training;
- Implicit bias/racial bias training outlining attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner;
- Restorative justice techniques;
- Cultural competency training that is provided to ACPD staff; and
- NASRO/DCJS SRO Update Training.

The review of the MOU provides an opportunity to have further discussion of priorities and requirements.

Rep: is this the current MOU with the new SROs or is that still underway?

Roslyn: this is language from current MOU but it is under review (reviewed every 2 years) - TBD after feedback what training will be

MOU between ACPD and ACPD

The current MOU can be found at the website: [ACPS and ACPD Memorandum of Understanding for SRO Program](#). Per State Code, the MOU must be reviewed every two years and opportunity for public input must be provided.

The primary goals of the MOU are to:

- Promote a positive and supportive school climate;
- Create and maintain safe and secure school environments;
- Collaborate to increase law-related education, expand school safety and crime prevention efforts, reduce conflict, and support effective interventions for students;
- Reduce and deter crime, violence, victimization, and fear in and around schools, and minimize student involvement with the juvenile and criminal justice systems; and
- Provide mutual understanding between school staff and the SRO about the role of SRO.

Additional Sections/Highlights:

- Roles/Responsibilities
- Training Requirements
- Communication/Information Sharing
- Operational Procedures



MOU goals and highlights: see slide. Work in progress. Training to get to a point where it is a partnership and we feel comfortable.

Rep: As someone who has their DCJS card, there is an aspect of training they need to pass and renew every 2 years. In school setting what is hands on vs competency?

Darah: We have programs now where trainings can be modified (restorative practice example) we can continue to morph and modified.

Rep: County wide or school by school?

Darah: Position based, not school.

Not on slide: know of concern re: immigration status.

Darah says as related to immigration status, there is no immigration enforcement within ACPD or Sheriff's office. Only time they get involved at schools is in criminal activity. Search warrants, arrest warrants. Partnership strong to not worry about not being aware. Re: immigration status concerns, SROs and our PD is not following up with enforcement of immigration practices in our buildings.

Rep: Coming at this from my therapist lens. As family from AHS, most families have no idea what is going on with SRO program. Since reimplementation there was no engagement it was all under the radar and shady. Voice from families I think ACPS has a lot of work to do to rebuild trust. Not family involvement, data, nothing is being shared. Huge gap in terms of including us. All we have to go on is national data - nothing to argue with. SROs do not make schools safer, do not make school shootings less lethal. Data shows creates harm primarily for black students, students of color, disabled students. tsData says SROs not effective in making school safer. ACPS now doing listening sessions. Gap there. If implementing new curriculum ACPS says this curriculum is not effective nation wide but we think it could be effective here and here is why.... No education to parents, black kids disciplined at higher rate. Trauma piece. Ralph is identified as the listener but he is a retired officer. If ACPS wants to hear from people what are we doing to make people feel safe vs. unsafe and prevent their voices in the room. Police office in room, those families are not coming to talk with that officer. We have no data to support this reintroduction of SROs. Asking kids to develop positive relationships with police ACPD, but 2020 study shows they disproportionately arrest black men here in ACPD. I propose that if we aren't getting rid of SROs, then instead of listening panel we have panel with legal aid & mental health child development speaking on facts and data to inform community. Otherwise you are listening to only uninformed opinions from people that do already feel safe talking to officers. Our responsibility as a division to provide that education to the public.

Daphne: We are at the beginning of doing this.

Rep: Should have happened 2 years ago.

Daphne: Point taken. We are going to groups and listening now. We are working together to put together community information session (webinar) with experts. We are going to take your feedback and put together an community information session with experts to talk about this.

Darah: there will be a google doc going out [only to Family Council]

Rep: All the research indicates SROs are not helpful. What data is being used as justification to bring them back. Want to see that data.

Darah: We have data from incidents from SROs number of calls. Think it is important, national data cannot be ignored, but there is component of what specifically do we have the ability to control and manage to help that data shift. We can get numbers to number of times principal has to call the police. More data as process goes along. What is specific to our families our students, our buildings, good or bad.

Rep: Are the schools involved in the decision of who is assign to them in any way or are they assigned by PD and schools taking who they are giving, Interview etc?

Darah: Yes, we are part of the interview process. Further discussion in partnership in assignment and hiring. So yes.

Rep: Recollection of MOU permits ACPD to revise at anytime, but not ACPS. Is there a plan to change that so school district can revise at anytime without waiting for renewal period? If we ware going to proceed with this we need more nimbleness to modify as things develop. Especially given the lack of input from community. Also note in MOU about it being mutually beneficial. Curious. Understand how you've describe benefits for school (knowing students and building) but what is the mutual benefit to ACPD - what is the advantage to them? To have an officer IN school instead of giving that training to multiple officers?

Darah: Some value if in prevention, teaching.

Rep: How does the use of 77 portables in ACPS impact this? Are SROs or SSOs involved in safety of portables?

Darah: Yes, SSOs to start with. Transition time support. SROs also out and walking grounds being visible. Don't know that portable vs larger building is impacting need for SRO, likely not a driving force. Having kids in building is goal, but complexities and money and capital improvement.

Rep: Is there anything in MOU about data that can be shared in public regarding how many calls etc not student info but breakdown about calls, what they assisted with, helpful for community to understand.

Darah: There is a summary sheet. There could maybe be more to that, unsure. We can see what can be made available.

Rep: Would it make sense to have that in the MOU? So maybe those pieces cannot be edited out, more collection of data and standardization of what is collected, would help the public and schools make decisions. Not having access on a local level brings a lot of ire.

Darah: There is a piece that talks about the school board can request the data to review effectiveness.

Rep: School district did a survey in 2020 for students and families about perception of SROs.

Rep: SEAC interest regarding training about kids with special needs and disability awareness. Where does this training come from, specified for age groups?

Darah: We control the 40 hours training component and decide what we feel is critical and important. Flexibility, empowerment, groups involved to understand what is vital. Modules? Competency based? Objectives. Ability to build that out.

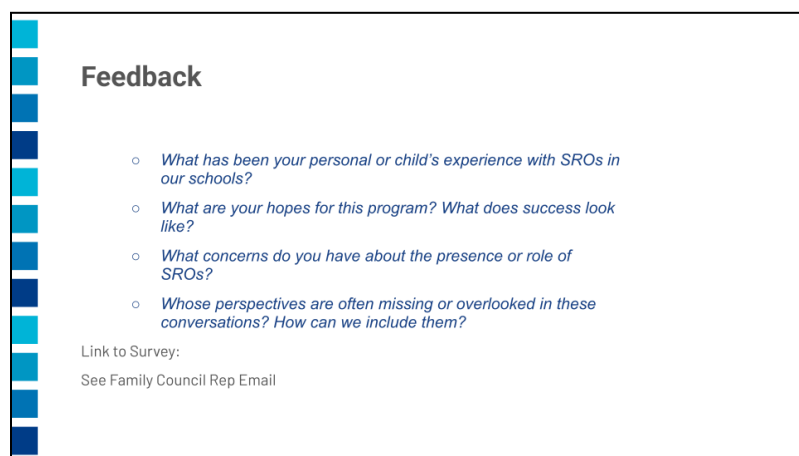
Rep: Is all training the same for SROs ?

Roslyn: Not broad here are all the disabilities more so here is what is specifically in our schools right now and focusing there.

Rep: Local data and that's an important but cannot throw away national data. Perception about schools safety is not the same as actual safety. Is there data we have right now that is not anecdotal that can be shared about why this decision is being made?

Darah: I'm sure there is but I do not have that right now.

Rep: National problems with SROs have come up a few times and request for metrics has come up. Metrics would be a great way to show we aren't replicating the national problem. Having this documentation is a great start but specific documentation acknowledges nation wide problems, spells out what we are doing to counter balance that, and then what our goals are - transparently.



Feedback

- *What has been your personal or child's experience with SROs in our schools?*
- *What are your hopes for this program? What does success look like?*
- *What concerns do you have about the presence or role of SROs?*
- *Whose perspectives are often missing or overlooked in these conversations? How can we include them?*

Link to Survey:
See Family Council Rep Email

Eric I: Will compile all these ideas, questions, concerns. We want to know if we have SROs, we want public input on what that training should be. What data points are important to the public as they relate to SROs?

Rep: Weapons screening concerns included in feedback?

Darah: please do.

Daphne K: Thank you for perspective. Heard trust piece. I think we get to that by continuing the conversations. Not going to be on the same page about everything, but will continue to work together to get to where we need to be. Next week, will be listening session with PTO presidents. Then also Student Senate. Working together on community info session at the end of the month. Hear from experts. Had meeting today about who we can bring in to be a part of

that. We are listening. I know it seems like you keep telling us things and we aren't acting on them but we are trying and we will continue to work at it. Appreciate your feedback and partnering with us to continue to do our best to incorporate what we are hearing.

ByLaws –

[See slides.](#)

Goal is to review every 3 years - had not actually been changed prior to 2023.

Please read info sent out - we will vote in May. Clean version, version with edits, and why edits were made. We also have the standing rules.

High level overview 1- make things official like our name change. 2 - word composition 3 - org resilience 4 - line edits.

Teacher Appreciation –

Looks like 122 educators will be celebrated through this effort. Posters, flowers, food distribution. Schedule not set yet - still coordinating, but we have time.

Teacher Appreciation Committee

What – FC collaboration with AFE to show gratitude to ACPS teachers without a PTO.

When – Week of May 4-9

Funds – Can use \$50 of Family Council bank account (over \$1000 from prior years dues). If more required, can put to vote or optional donations via Venmo.

Posters – ?

Update – ?




Bystander intervention training –

Made for community members, teens would be appropriate. We want feedback from families that attend. We want to possibly use this in our high schools. Right To Be has great resources and programs, webinars, etc. Feedback please!




Work Session: Listening Homework

Why? Guide survey from Family Council to be sent to all ACPS families. Specifically, narrow the list of potential topics to be rated. These will guide Family Council's work next year, along with priorities aligned to key ACPS activities.

<p>Work Session – Listening Homework</p> <p>Find THREE parents or caregivers of a student at the school you represent (or within your community for At-Large reps) whose voices may not be well-represented within ACPS discussions.</p> <p>Submit answers on Google Form before our April meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you select this person? (Briefly) • Q1 – What is the biggest challenge your family is currently facing with school? • Q2 – If you could change one thing about ACPS that would make a difference for your kid or family, what would you change? • Optional – Share your personal reflection about what this input means for how Family Council does business. 	
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17 Responses via Google Form with additional on Sticky Notes (see photos at end):

 April 2025 Listening Homework (Responses)

Major Topics:

- Communication

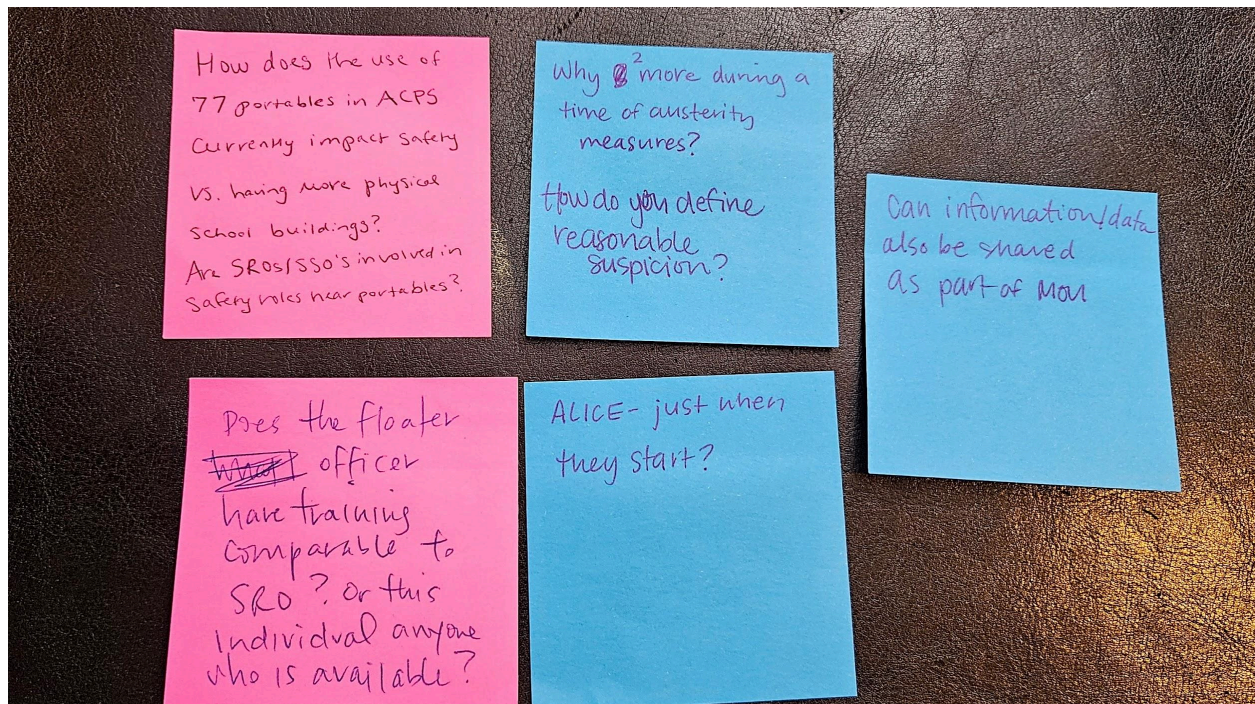
- Math/Reading
- Out-of-School Care/Timing
- Discipline/Behavior
- Talent Development
- Teacher/Student Support
- Community
- Transitions - School to School/Post-Secondary
- Other

May meeting - Will be trying again to confirm talent development advisory session before the revised plan is due to the state. Had needed to get input from advisory committee members first. Principals will join us in May, we hope, with topic of family engagement.

From Office of Community Engagement – Forums on what do we want community safety to look like: virtual, will be sent out. Chance to weigh in on what solutions do we have and making our community safer.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 with reminder of last meeting in May.

Sticky Notes from Meeting:



Math/Reading

"Low reading and math scores across the country in the public education system"

"Difficulty with math homework"

"Math materials for elementary students need support for parents. We can't help them if we are doing it wrong!"

"Math teachers out frequently, lots of subs and busy work"

Why are families being asked to help decide the new K-5 math curriculum? Isn't this decision for educators that should be based on research indicating which is best? Appreciate transparency but not in this case.

How do schools with instructional coaches get math support?

Paper protractors used by 5th graders

In absence of textbooks, teachers need to provide examples of how to solve math problems for students to refer back to.

VDOE constantly changing requirements.

How do we become resilient for this: families, students, teachers?

Math is important foundational stuff!

No support for kids in advanced math

Updates on new curriculum and support for students

Talent Development

"I would bring back real investment in differentiated learning, and I don't just mean having a gifted label or a learning support plan—I mean actual, skill-based placement that reflects each child's capabilities, with teachers who are empowered (and supported) to teach at different levels. I'd also push for more structure, higher expectations, and clearer boundaries. Kids need to know what's expected of them, and they need teachers who are actively teaching—not just curating YouTube links or letting kids teach themselves while classrooms spiral into chaos. It's not just about academics—it's about developing life skills, respect for learning, and internal motivation. Right now, the message seems to be: mediocrity is fine, deadlines are suggestions, and violence or disruptive behavior is just another moment for a gentle conversation. But kids are confused, and they deserve better."

"As a parent of three very different learners—one highly gifted, one with a lower IQ and trauma background, and one who is bright and empathetic but in an under-resourced environment—I would say the biggest challenge we're facing is the lack of appropriate, differentiated support. My gifted children have consistently struggled with being under-stimulated, often expected to do regular classwork plus more advanced work in their "free time," which unfairly asks them to take on double the workload instead of just being offered work that actually fits their level. Meanwhile, my youngest is in a school where behavioral issues dominate the day, and the academic bar is shockingly low, with minimal feedback or accountability. At the same time, my daughter with learning differences is in a project-based high school that's so unstructured she often doesn't know what's expected of her. Across the board, I see a school system that tries to be everything to everyone but ends up not meeting the actual needs of anyone—and the result is disappointment, disengagement, and in some cases, a decision to leave the public school system entirely."

What does
Talent Development
entail w/in
ACPS?
How does each
school differ?

Competency
evaluations
for all educators
including EDEP!

The resource seems to
be applied differently in
different schools. It
does not seem to align
with guidelines on ACPS
website.

Teacher/Student Support

"4th grade teacher quit two months ago due to constant disruptions in class, was unable to continue teaching"

"Keep good teachers! Work with teachers if in situation unable to teach. Find another way or a solution that works for the teacher AND the disruptive student."

"More resources (staff and curriculum) to support teachers' meeting a variety of students needs for instruction while also maintaining inclusion in the classroom. (not sending kids out of the classroom to get needs met)"

"-Unequal funding across the public school sector and understaffing, low teacher and staff salaries, and scarce resources for those schools who are underfunded." +

"I would like to see stronger accountability when it comes to following through on student supports, especially for students with IEPs or those facing social or emotional challenges. Support on paper doesn't always translate to real change in the classroom or social environment, and students shouldn't have to advocate for themselves just to access what's already been promised." +

Teachers hired
last minute or
after the school
year starts.

How do we
get amazing
teachers to stay?

Which schools have
best retention?
What can we
learn from their
admin/class sizes
etc.

Class sizes increased
who additional
supports for students
OR teachers

Out-of-School Care/Timing

"I guess I would fix all the stuff I said in question 1. Oh, I think we need to get after school care figured out! I know a lot of my friends have nothing to do with kids after school or have to quit or change jobs. It's not easy at all. I wish ACPS did aftercare for everyone, to help support parents. And then how can I meet with my kid teachers when they don't work during the hours I am free after I'm off work? This one is hard. I don't have much days off."

"I think middle school should be the same time as elementary. I think 6 & 7 grade may be a little young to get themselves to school if I had to be in office after dropping my elementary child off."

"No pick up after 3:30 seems illegal and harms a child needing to leave early for an outside activity, especially for my child, who is a preprofessional dancer."

"More flexibility and understanding with pick-up and outside of school activities"

Before/
After school
clubs?
More

M.S. Before
School Care
@Journey
other MSs?

Are school hours
at all levels (mostly
middle/hs) too much
and are after school
activities starting
too early?

EDEP

Community

"Large school with fewer opportunities to develop lasting friendships as classes are changed year to year with sometimes no carryover with regards to friends staying together."

"more community building events at larger schools-more ways to know my kid's friends and their families"

"difficult finding time to attend school events"

- ① Alternate days of the week for school events
- ② Offer childcare for school events
- ③ Check feeder pattern school event schedules so events do not conflict

↑
yes.

currently PTOs
+ sports
serve this
need - not so
equitable

↑
yes

Car pick-up stops
parents from naturally
socializing.

↑
yes!

Discipline/Behavior

"The need for a more structured environment (i.e. less distractions from disruptive behaviors from others—the ability for better behavior management so learning can be better focused on)"

"My daughter is headed to Journey Middle School in the fall, and I have heard from other parents that the ACPS policy states that teachers are not allowed to use any physicality to separate students who are fighting. I recognize where this rule is coming from, but the result is that fights last longer and students are able to inflict more damage. How about offering a training for teachers that would give them some sort of special certification so that most people (or at least a large number of people) in the building would be able to break up a fight, restore order, and actually protect students? If kids know that teachers can't touch them, some kids (who are bullies) will be emboldened. This policy is so nonsensical to me that I have started exploring private school options, which would put my family in a very difficult financial position."

"The alarming rising rates of bullying in schools and the rise of mental health issues in children such as depression & anxiety"

"Bullying."

Students +
Parents are not
believed when they
report bullying.
Students are placed
back with bullies
w/o intervention.

Consistency is
a problem. Kids
using sexual remarks
& racial slurs.
Consequences vary
based on race +
gender.

CHEATING.

So so
prevalent.
Can class activities
be structured to
use cheating tools
wisely? Please not
like cheating
like cheating

Racially
oriented bullying—
"mild" comments
are hard to police
but pervasive
+

Student-
centered /
driven
bullying
hate
prevention

Other Comments

"I would propose implementing a requirement that school board representatives and term-limited administrators must have at least one child currently enrolled in the school system. Too often, we see leadership composed of individuals who do not have a direct, personal stake in the day-to-day experiences of our students. While their intentions may be good, the absence of a current parental perspective can result in decisions that are disconnected from the realities faced by families. +

Having leaders who are actively navigating the school system as parents brings an added layer of accountability, empathy, and urgency to their decision-making. These individuals are more likely to consider the long-term impact of policies on students, advocate for practical improvements, and align more closely with the priorities and concerns of the broader parent community.

Ultimately, this requirement would help ensure that those in leadership are truly invested in the system's success, not just as policymakers, but as parents whose children are directly affected by the outcomes of their decisions"

SB Members
Should spend
time in every
School in
their district
4-6 times a
year

Good point and
warrants further
discussion

Maybe
should have
SOME kind
of community
connection —
Don't want to
limit contributions to
parents

parents of school-age kids

listening
sessions
PRIOR to
budget
decisions w/
Big implications

otherwise listening
sessions feel performative
or Box-checking

Communication

"Lack of communication"

"Communication is extremely teacher dependent. Some are great at sharing, others don't share at all."

Challenge: "Elementary grading, progress monitoring, and communication. Better access to grades would help in elementary school - there was no indication a student was failing assignments until the 5th grade parent/teacher conference."

"There's a lack of communication with regards to how my student is doing."

"We need more clear and consistent communication regarding student successes, challenges, etc."

"Lack of communication from middle school leadership about fights/violence at school, and a sense that some of the messaging about school values doesn't resonate with the kids (feels kind of aloof/detached from what they are experiencing or care about?)."

"Additionally, ACPs could improve how it communicates with families from diverse backgrounds. Even when language isn't a barrier, understanding how to navigate school systems, sports, discipline policies, or academic options can still be overwhelming. More culturally responsive outreach and transparency would go a long way in helping all families feel informed, empowered, and truly part of the school community."

For this but to add
that parents need more
awareness during crisis
(aka. BBE emails after
gunshots heard in area)
need phone call (automated
is ok) email (no)

Texted
communication
also requires
you to link
off to a webpage
to know what
it's about!
Reduces communication!!!

How to reduce
teacher workload
so they could offer
30 min of "after-
hours" comms ~~for~~
parents restricted
by work schedules

interpretation
services for PTO
meetings -

"Remind" application is
good for simple
communication - pick-up
charges - but does not
fill in for actual conversation
with teacher about important
issues

Transitions – School to School/Post-Secondary

"He also expressed concern over the drastic change in structure and responsibilities from 5th to 6th grade. He felt like there was very little introduction and explanation of middle school expectations for his student from not lingering in the halls to the structure of homework assignments."

"when kids go to middle school from elementary school, they feel overwhelmed because of so many new things in middle school like being independent (which is good but sudden change), homework, using lockers' password (which is new to them). So if they get some homework from the elementary schools especially 5th graders, they will get use to it. At least they will not get overwhelmed with suddenly getting homework in middle school. Just sharing my thought."

"He also expressed concern over the drastic change in structure and responsibilities from 5th to 6th grade. He felt like there was very little introduction and explanation of middle school expectations for his student from not lingering in the halls to the structure of homework assignments."

"Uncertainty Around College and Post-Secondary Planning

Challenge: Understanding the timeline and requirements for college applications, standardized tests, scholarships, and extracurricular involvement can feel confusing and overwhelming. Especially for families going through the process for the first time or without prior college experience.

Family Impact: Parents may struggle to find a starting point, aren't always aware of available resources, and often feel unsure about how best to support their teen in making important decisions about the future."

Mentors
(Big Buddy" to
help elem → Middle
middle → HS)
assigned for the
1st year w/
regular check-ins

ACPS has so many options but
how are we helping families
make good decisions 9-12?

BWES → Journey
transition related
to diversity & changes

The transition to
middle (and
sometimes high)
is also where a
lot of learning
disabilities
surface. Can
we have a phased
transition approach
the way colleges have

Freshman seminar
etc → Not
like the current
Advisory more like a
brief intensive "how to
middle/high" w/ one-on-one
connections