Arlington Public Schools

Arlington School Board Meeting

Beginning of School Update

September 10, 2026

First Day Video

EVERY STUDENT COUNTS

EXCELLENCE FOR ALL



Opening by the Numbers

27,176

Students enrolled as of Sept. 9

Official enrollment count: Sept. 30





Ready to Welcome Students



- **99.05% Staffed on Day One**
- **27 Teacher Vacancies**

	Full Time	Part Time
Elementary	4	7
Secondary	15	1
Total	19	8

School-based substitutes and long-term substitutes are assigned to classes with vacancies while recruitment continues.

Families Connected Before Day One

72%

Districtwide Completion
(*as of Sept. 9)*

68%

Overall Completion
2025-26

78.3%

Of schools have already surpassed their 2025-26 completion rate



What's Driving Progress

- Earlier outreach to schools and families
- ParentVUE forced registration
- School, registrar and Bilingual Family Specialist support

From 72% to Every Family Reached



Identify

- Focus support on schools and families with lower completion.

Remove Barriers

- Paper packets plus registrar and Bilingual Family Specialist support.

Expand Outreach

- Add WhatsApp and other targeted family outreach.
- Next Target: Parent-Teacher Conferences

Transportation Services: Keeping APS Moving



DAY ONE BY THE NUMBERS

- **145** Bus Routes
- **16321** General Education Eligible Riders
- **829** Special Education Eligible Riders
- **1400** First-Week Transportation Inquiries

Transportation: Responding & Adjusting

Our Focus: Safe, reliable transportation & continued improvement as the school year gets underway.

What We Are Seeing

- Start-of-year challenges with some routes, ride times and bus capacity
- New Transfinder routing system continues to be refined as actual ridership and enrollment are confirmed

What We Are Doing

- Monitoring routes daily and making adjustments based on performance and family feedback
- Using CDL-certified transportation staff and supervisors to help cover routes while driver vacancies remain
- Reviewing student assignments and routing data to resolve issues and improve service

What Families Should Know

- Transportation inquiries are being addressed as quickly as possible
- New or changed transportation assignments may take additional time while routes are optimized
- An **ATS Hub Pilot** has been introduced to enhance student safety and improve transportation service reliability.
- An APS survey will be distributed to gather feedback from ATS families and stakeholders regarding their transportation experience.
- Our district-wide bus tracking app is scheduled for a targeted launch at the end of October, providing families with improved visibility into student transportation.

Food Services: Fueling Student Success

Breakfast	Elementary Lunch	Middle & High Lunch
$2.55	$3.65	$3.90



Free & Reduced-Price Meals: Families must reapply each school year. Students who received benefits last year have a **30-day grace period** from the first day of school to reapply. Applications may be submitted throughout the school year.

10 Schools | Meals at No Cost: Students at 10 APS schools receive meals at no cost through the **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)**. No application is required.

Meal Accounts & Menus: All students have a meal account connected to their student ID. Families can monitor balances through MySchoolBucks and access daily menus online.

Instructional Initiatives: 3 Key Focus Areas

High-Quality Instruction	Responsive Schools	Building Capacity through Coherent Coaching and Professional Learning Systems
• High-Quality Tier 1 Instruction • Science of Learning for Math and New Resource Adoption • Specially Designed Instruction • Student Devices: Purposeful Learning & Digital Citizenship	• SEL Work • Chronic Absenteeism • Discipline Disproportionality • Family Engagement	• Updated Professional Development Plan • Coaching Framework • Job Embedded Professional Development • Specially Designed Instruction / Inclusion

Closing Gaps Through Purposeful Practice

Homework provides additional opportunities for students to practice what they are learning and strengthen essential skills.

Purpose

- Reinforce the learning that matters most.

Intention

- Connect homework directly to classroom instruction and student needs.

Practice

- Give students consistent opportunities to build fluency, confidence and independence.

The Goal:

- More meaningful practice. Stronger skills. **Greater opportunity for every student to succeed.**

To Read the Homework Policy, Click Here

Academic Integrity: Clear, Consistent Expectations

- **Divisionwide expectations** for academic integrity in Grades 6–12
- **Shared responsibility** among students, staff and families
- **Clear guidance** for AI use, including when and how it may be used
- **Progressive, restorative responses** that help students learn from mistakes
- **Educator judgment matters:** AI detection is ***never*** used to determine a violation

To Read the Academic Integrity Policy, Click Here

Preparing Students & Staff for an AI-Enabled Future

- **Vetted Tools** (SchoolAI is our monitored tool used by trained educators)
- **Protected Access**
  Data-protected GenAI tools for professional use
- **Responsible Use**
  Clear expectations and guidance
- **Continued Learning**
  Ongoing implementation, professional learning and communication

Bilingual Family Specialists

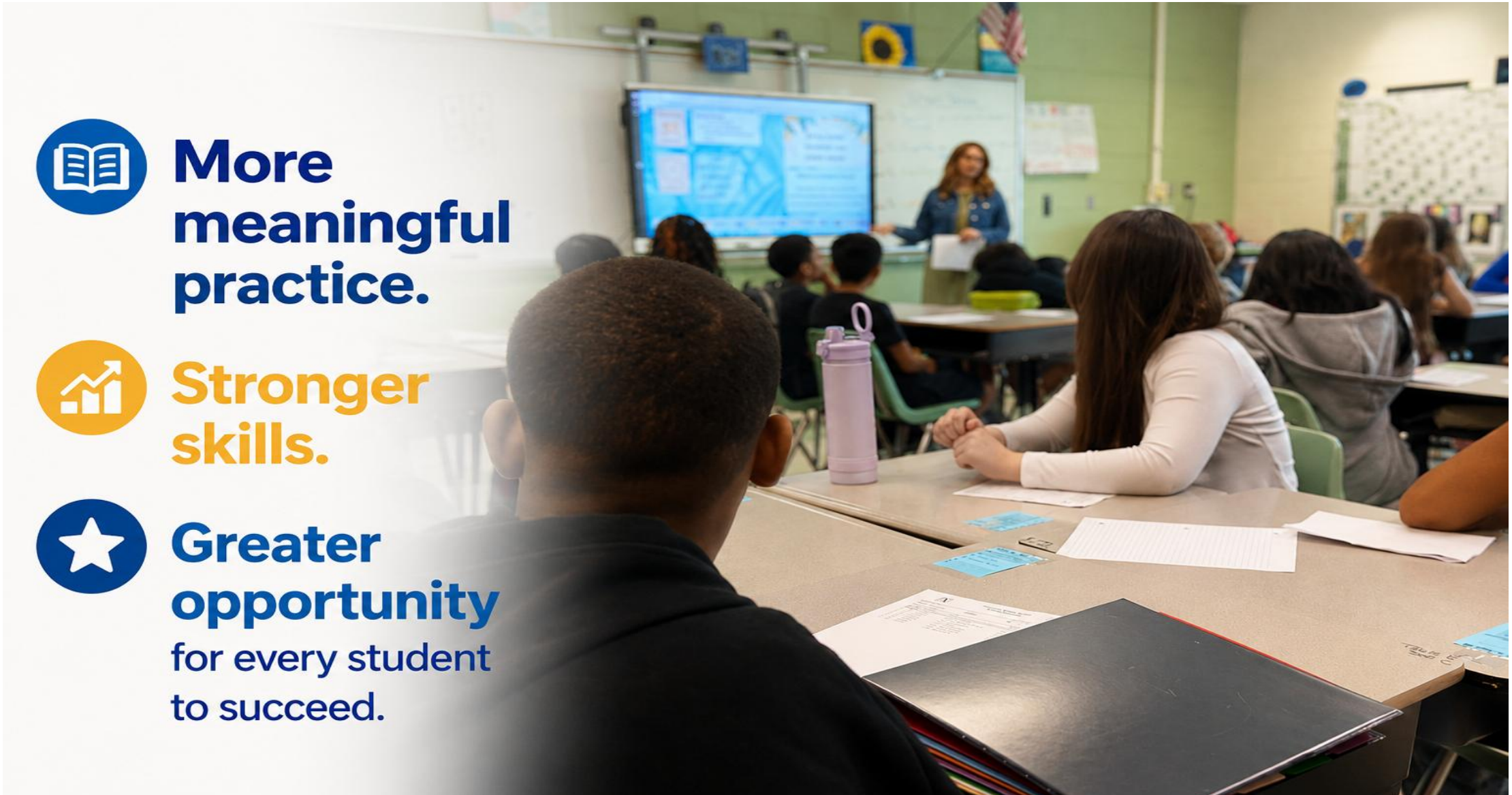
Building Consistency. Strengthening Family Connections.



- **43 BFS across 32 schools and programs** supporting multilingual families.
- **Clearer roles and shared expectations** across schools.
- **Data-informed action plans** with 104 SMART goals focused on family engagement and impact.
- **Consistent family learning** focused on navigating school, ParentVUE/ParentSquare and student progress.
- **Stronger school-wide systems** that make information and support easier for families to access.

Belonging and Connection

Students learn best when they feel safe, known and connected.



Turning Belonging Into Action

A sense of belonging is built through everyday interactions.



- **Start with Kindness**
  Positive routines and relationships
- **Strengthen Connection**
  "K" Keys to Connection
- **Make Support Visible**
  "I'm Here" badges and school-based resources

Belonging is foundational to learning.

Every student should know: I am known. I am supported. I know where to turn for help.

One Place to Start: Onflo *(Formerly Let's Talk)*

Nearly 3,000 Tickets

67% Phone
26% Email
4% Landing Page
3% Other Entries

238 Active APS Representatives

What's Next: Chatbot and expanding school access

Technology: Preparing APS for Day One

- **Preparing For the First Day**
  Throughout the summer, Information Services prepared the systems, applications, networks and devices needed for students and staff to begin the year ready to teach and learn.
- **Strengthening The Foundation**
  APS continued investments in the technology infrastructure that supports classrooms and operations every day.
- **Making Systems Work Better**
  Technology improvements are also helping APS streamline operations and make information easier for staff and families to access.

Information Services

Infrastructure Readiness

- Configured and installed new networking equipment.
- Completed network infrastructure needed for new and changing APS spaces.
- Continued wireless and network upgrade work over the summer.
- 520+access points upgraded/replaced over the summer

Cybersecurity and Data Protection

- Upgraded threat detection and automated response systems.
- Enhanced email phishing and threat management protections.
- Strengthened safeguards for student and staff data.
- Improved protection for APS business operations.

Family and Community Access

- Enhanced Elementary Report Cards to translate automatically into five languages.
- Integrated Google Translate throughout Synergy, including registration and report cards.
- Improved transparency and accountability through Strategic Plan dashboards.

Enterprise Readiness

- Prepared enrollment and scheduling updates.
- Readied instructional, student support, administrative, operational and reporting systems.
- Supported required reporting and summer school and instructional programs.

Behind the Classroom: Systems That Support Learning

9,455
STUDENT DEVICES
Received, tagged, inventoried, processed

520
CHARGING CARTS
Prepared and delivered

4,000
IPAD CASES
Processed

200
SMART PANELS
Processed

Instructional Systems

14,000+
courses/classes and sections across Canvas and across APS student systems

400+
Instructional and administrative applications supported

15
New Math and ELA Instructional resources based applications implemented

Infrastructure Readiness

520+
wireless access points upgraded/replaced over the summer

13
Network Infrastructure hubs installed in Grace Hopper and ACHS

Reliable systems. Secure information. Better access.
More time focused on students.

2026-27 Priorities & Projects

Teaching, Learning & Student Experience

- **Student Devices** – Implement updated device approach and Phase 1 opt-in
- **Artificial Intelligence** – Advance responsible AI use, guidance, professional learning and community engagement
- **Attendance** – Build on progress reducing chronic absenteeism and address persistent disparities
- **Grading & Academic Integrity** – Strengthen consistent practices and expectations
- **Instructional Excellence** – Strengthen literacy, mathematics, co-teaching and inclusive instruction
- **Grace Hopper Center** – Open new learning environment for Career Center and Langston programs

2026-27 Priorities & Projects

People, Systems & Community

- **Arlington Community High School** – Begin the year in its new permanent home at Amazon HQ2
- **Employee Benefits** – Prepare for transition to 2027 health and prescription plans
- **HR Transformation** – Strengthen systems, processes and employee experience
- **Capital & Facilities Planning** – Advance long-range facilities and capital priorities
- **Student Well-Being & Belonging** – Continue focus on attendance, safety, belonging and discipline disproportionality, LGBTQIA supports
- **Family & Community Engagement** – Strengthen communication, partnership and opportunities for community voice

Contact APS!

Have a question, concern, or suggestion?

We're here to help!

Arlington Public Schools

You can start by contacting the school directly if it's about a student.
If you have other questions, please refer to the contact list below.

703-228-8000
Option 1 English

Welcome Center ..... Option 1	Academics ..... Option 6
Transportation Services ..... Option 2	ENGAGE/School Board ..... Option 7
Extended Day ..... Option 3	Human Resources ..... Option 8
Food Services ..... Option 4	General Questions ..... Option 9
Technical Support ..... Option 5	

If no one answers, please leave a voicemail summarizing your inquiry and contact information. This will ensure that someone will return the call.

Immunization Clinic
703-228-1200

STAY CONNECTED!

Download **ParentVUE** to view student progress:
apsva.us/parentvue-canvas

Download ParentSquare to receive communications:
apsva.us/parentsquare

Visit the APS website to learn about more ways to contact us:
apsva.us/contact-aps/

SCAN ME!





































From a Strong Start to a Strong Year