

City Council/School Board Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2025

5:00 p.m.

City Hall

301 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

City Council and School Board Member Attendees:

Mayor Alyia Gaskins (remote)

Councilman John Chapman

School Board Chair Michelle Rief

School Board Vice Chair Christopher Harris

Virginia School Performance and Support Framework (SPSF)

Presenter: Dr. Clint Page, Chief Accountability and Research Officer, ACPS

Dr. Page provided an overview of the Commonwealth's new accountability system, which replaces the traditional accreditation model. The new two-part framework separates regulatory compliance (accreditation) from student performance (SPSF).

Under the new system:

- Elementary and middle schools are measured on mastery, growth, and readiness.
- High schools are evaluated on mastery, graduation rates, and readiness, with readiness currently based on chronic absenteeism.

Schools are assigned one of four designations: *Distinguished (90+)*, *On Track (80–89)*, *Off Track (65–79)*, or *Needs Intensive Support (<65)*. A federal identification for subgroup underperformance automatically reduces a school's rating by one level.

Major changes include the requirement that schools meet both mastery and growth targets (not one or the other), the use of a performance index rather than pass rates, and the shortening of the English Learner proficiency window from 5.5 to 1.5 years. Subgroup reporting is now handled only at the federal level. The Virginia Department of Education expects the proportion of “underperforming” schools to increase from 15% to roughly 35%.

Discussion

Councilmember Chapman and Mayor Gaskins stressed the need for coordinated messaging between the City and ACPS, noting that new data could be easily misinterpreted by business audiences. Dr. Page described the existing communication strategy, including informational videos and family flyers, and agreed to expand outreach once results are released.

Equity impacts were also discussed, particularly for ACPS's 38% English Learner population, compared with less than 10% in most Virginia districts. Dr. Page noted that while the new framework raises expectations, it also aligns with ACPS's focus on student growth and readiness through Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways.

Although no new funding accompanies the policy change, ACPS plans to coordinate with other Northern Virginia divisions through the Public School Leaders Network during the 2026 legislative session.

Presentation: Student Generation Rate (SGR) Update

Presenters: Carrie Beach, Michael D'Orazio, and Katherine Carraway (Planning & Zoning) and Sophie Huemer (ACPS)

City and ACPS staff provided an update on the methodology and results of the 2025 Student Generation Rates, which measure how many students are typically produced by different housing types.

The analysis used a three-year average (2022–2024), combining all K–12 students and categorizing them by building type and building age (under or over 30 years). The findings showed that older housing stock, which represents about 70% of all units, generates 88% of enrolled students, while newer housing accounts for the remaining 12%.

Although the rates remain generally stable since the 2023 analysis, slight shifts were observed in affordable housing categories due to smaller sample sizes. These rates are primarily applied to new developments during planning and zoning reviews to estimate future student impacts.

Discussion

Councilmembers asked about accuracy and broader context for evaluating development proposals. Planning staff explained that SGRs are derived from real student addresses and adjusted through averaging to reduce anomalies. The committee discussed adding comparative data to show how redevelopment or adjacent older housing stock affects enrollment and suggested future longitudinal study on trends in student generation. Staff pointed to Figure 1: [City's Housing Inventory by Type and Age on page 3](#) of the attached memo to address to provide additional information.

ACPS representatives emphasized the need to analyze net new students when redevelopment occurs, as displaced families often relocate within Alexandria. Members also noted regional

birth-rate declines and requested an updated 10-year enrollment projection that integrates planned development.

Planning staff confirmed that SGR data also inform small area plans—including Duke Street, Potomac Yard, and Eisenhower East/West—by estimating student generation alongside other infrastructure needs such as recreation and open space.

Presentation: Long Range Educational Facilities Plan (LREFP) Update

Presenters: Katherine Carraway (Planning & Zoning) and Sophie Huemer (ACPS)

The committee received an update on the upcoming effort to revise the City’s Long Range Educational Facilities Plan, originally adopted in 2015. That plan established low, moderate, and high enrollment scenarios based on population forecasts, birth rates, kindergarten capture rates and cohort survival rates.

Spring 2025 enrollment trends mirror the moderate scenario, with projections showing enrollment peaking in one to two years, leveling off, and then declining as birth rates continue to fall.

The updated plan will integrate post-pandemic data, new VDOE guidelines for school design, and modernized educational adequacy analyses that account for special education and evolving program space needs. The framework will emphasize flexibility and align with subsequent ACPS and City studies and data including the Joint Facilities Master Plan (JFMP), Green Building Policy, and co-location opportunities for shared community use.

Staff are currently developing a draft scope of work, aiming to return with an update in January 2026, followed by consultant procurement in spring 2026.

Discussion

Members discussed adding a review trigger to keep the plan current, re-establishing a community advisory group with broader representation (including the Office of Climate Action), and potentially forming a joint subcommittee of Council and School Board members to support engagement throughout the process. Councilman Chapman raised that this is a staff intensive effort that incorporates best practices, suggesting that an external Advisory Group may not be necessary for the project.

Lessons learned from the prior plan included the need for clearer implementation milestones, ongoing monitoring, and consistent prioritization amid changing conditions. The City reiterated its Project Labor Agreement (PLA) policy for construction projects exceeding approximately \$35 million, citing the City Hall renovation as a recent example and highlighting opportunities for workforce development and CTE integration.

Administrative Business

The committee approved the April 28 meeting minutes (motion by Chapman, second by Harris) and adopted the meeting calendar for the remainder of FY26, confirming the next session for November 24 at City Hall and subsequent meetings at ACPS.

The committee will revisit its workplan in November to determine whether to maintain standing agendas or focus on rotating topics. ACPS will also provide an update on school zone and boundary implementation, as family notifications begin in November.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Action Items for Follow-Up

Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline
Develop and release joint City–School communication plan on SPSF results	ACPS & City Communications	Upon state release of data
Add contextual “before/after” tables and nearby older-stock data to project site plan briefings	P&Z / CMO	Pilot in next review cycle
Provide housing inventory by typology and updated 10-year enrollment projections (with development impacts)	P&Z / ACPS	Next projection cycle
Deliver January 2026 LREFP progress update (scope, milestones, triggers)	ACPS / P&Z	January 2026
Initiate consultant procurement for LREFP	ACPS	Spring 2026
Circulate PLA budget guidance and City Hall case study	City Manager’s Office	Before January 2026