

Public Hearing on the Continuity of Learning Plan 4.0
Virtual Special Called School Board Meeting
July 10, 2020
Comments from Kita McCord

Thank you. My name is Kita McCord, and I am a parent to a rising second grader and rising kindergartner at MVCS.

It is what it is and I'm glad you are looking at solutions that most closely-resemble the in-school learning that we had. I hope you are exploring outdoor classrooms, indoor swing spaces, different solutions for different grades, and different times throughout the day for synchronous learning - I know some parents aren't home during the day to help their students get on Zoom calls.

However, no matter what mix of in-person and virtual learning is determined, it sounds like it won't fill 100% of the hours of a normal school day. So how can we support our teachers and homeschooling parents by filling in the remaining hours with amazing supplemental learning experiences? How can we think of this as an opportunity to engage the community around investing in and educating our youth? We can all play a role.

I think we need to mobilize the various stakeholders who are ready, willing, and able to be a part of the solution. Pieced together, we can support teachers to offer a robust learning environment for our students. Any of the stakeholders I will list can support learning virtually for one-on-one learning, small group learning, or class-sized learning. However, I also think we can safely employ these stakeholders as roving or traveling tutors to meet small groups of students in safe indoor or outdoor spaces near their homes. In-person learning has so many benefits, as you know....

1. The parents - many parents already volunteer in the classrooms. They were already planning to support their child's classmates with their assignments in the classroom.
2. Student-teachers - they can't get their practical in-class experience this year. They are ready to think creatively and know best practices in online and in-person learning. How are we partnering with universities?
3. Recent HS and college grads - their plans have been disrupted. They can become a local service corps of tutors to aid students with their assignments
4. Current HS students - let's create a service learning credit for them to tutor their younger neighbors and help teach them
5. Retirees & people who have been furloughed from their jobs - a neighbor has been giving my daughter individualized Spanish lessons once a week over zoom during this pandemic. I bet there are many amazing volunteers in our community who could do the same for a variety of subjects
6. Nonprofits - many are already ACPS partners and cleared to work in the schools. Let's mobilize them on a larger scale to serve our students near the students' homes on days they aren't at their schools
7. Local businesses & historic sites - partner with them to offer virtual field trips so students can learn more about our strong community

ACT for Alexandria set up a covid crisis response fund. If we can use this and other philanthropic funding, we can offer stipends to support some of these individuals.

It is our imperative as a community to do all we can to ensure our students stay engaged and excited to learn, and importantly, feel valued by their community. Let's invest in them. Our actions today will have profound consequences for years to come. I would love to join any teams that exist or be a part of

mobilizing a new one to connect the stakeholders around this ambitious and necessary effort to supplement schooling next year. Let's mobilize our resources TODAY to minimize academic learning loss and maximize social-emotional learning going forward.