

# Public Comments for Virtual School Board Meetings #120

**My public comments are related to: \*** School Renaming

**Topic \*** Rename TCWHS

**Name \*** Blaire Van Valkenburgh

**What is your relationship to ACPS? \*** Alumnus

**To include your comments as part of the Public Comments agenda item at weekly Special Called School Board Meetings, enter your comments here:**

I attended T.C. Williams High School from 8th grade through 12th grade, between 1964 and 1970. I was born in D.C. and grew up in Alexandria. My mother, Lois Van Valkenburgh, was very active in the schools, civil rights issues, and improving mental health access for everyone, among other things. She and my father raised me to believe in equal opportunity and respect for all people, whatever their background or color. I had no idea that my high school's namesake, T.C. Williams, held strongly racist views and actively worked against equal rights and the integration of Alexandria's schools. I am ashamed of my ignorance and pleased to see that there is an opportunity to fix this wrong and rename my high school. I write to express my strong support for the removal of TC Williams name from my high school. I reject the argument that the name is so tightly associated with student success that it must be kept to ensure that graduates are recognized and preferred by college admissions offices. Now that the wrongs of Mr. Williams have been revealed to many, it is an embarrassment and a stain on the city of Alexandria to have their top high school bear his name. The football team can and should remain as the Titans, but TC Williams has to go. It is time for us to right the myriad wrongs that have been done to people of color in this country.

Sincerely,  
Blair Van Valkenburgh  
Distinguished Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology  
UCLA