

## School Board Comments

11/9/17

Good evening members of the Alexandria School Board. My name is Sandra Strachan-Vieira and I am here tonight to ask the School Board to expand the current special education evaluation. As the parent of a TC Williams student who has received special education services since kindergarten and a 4-time SEAC Co-Chair, I have a unique as well as a historical perspective on the importance and potential impact this evaluation's results will have on the futures of students with disabilities in ACPS. Since I only have 3-minutes I will be direct and to the point regarding why it is imperative the evaluation be expanded to include all schools.

I am going to begin with a Malcolm X quote:

“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.”

In order to prepare the ACPS students with disabilities for the future we need a *new* road map to that future. As a member of SEAC who fought to have this study commissioned, I am very pleased that it is moving forward.

In order for ACPS to really “get to the bottom of” or the “root causes” of these pervasive problems that have hindered progress for well over a decade for student with disabilities, all schools – and in ACPS each school has its own unique populations and culture – **ALL schools need to be able to understand what is happening in their building – what is working well and what needs improvement.** Because each school in this small system is its own unique cultural microcosm and independent entity - we really need to understand at a deeper level *how each individual school-based climate and culture operates, and how this impacts their student outcomes* –

To expand the evaluation to every school, the cost is only about \$69 per special education student. I feel that is but a small investment to give ACPS:

- 1) a new overall *multi-year* systemic roadmap,
- 2) In addition to the high-level systemic information, the principals at every school will have *unique-to-their-school insights* they need to improve outcomes for students with disabilities
- 3) *and, most importantly*, with the new information gathered by expanding this evaluation AND with the School Board implementing such recommendations, **it will help all students with disabilities obtain a new path and passport to a brighter future.**

Good evening and thank you for your consideration.

(2minutes -24 seconds)