

Virtual School Board Meeting
April 8, 2021
Virtual Public Comments by Helen Morris

Chair Alderton, Honorable School Board Members, and Dr. Hutchings,

Tonight, I'm here to support your endorsement of the Children & Youth Master Plan and ask you to think broadly and innovatively on behalf of our youth and families and use the great resource you have in the CYMP.

Addresses 3 important goals in our City

1. All children, youth and families will be physically safe and healthy
2. Every child will be academically successful and career ready
3. Every young person and their family will have positive experiences

My involvement in the CYMP is as a leader of the Developmental Assets Work Group and a community trainer in Developmental Assets, and in preventing risk-taking behaviors through my work with the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy.

The power of this plan is that it is grounded in data, it provides concrete actions to support youth and families, and it provides supports so that anyone who knows youth in their community, volunteers with youth and families, or works with or on behalf of youth and families can do their work more effectively and with more intentionality.

As you know, we're in a powerful moment when 3 city-wide plans relating to our youth, families, and communities are being finalized and ratified: ACPS 2025, Children & Youth Master Plan and Comprehensive Health Improvement Plan from the Alexandria Health Department.

These 3 plans include extensive input from so many of our community members, and they offer the potential to align decisions in our city around the priorities of equity; access for ALL Alexandrians to education, work, services and amenities; and using resources to level the playing field for Alexandrians whose voices have not been prioritized in the past. This potential can be realized if all of us together are willing to work innovatively, through the lens of equity, and outside of the silos that we know stifle forward progress.

Tonight, as every night, you are considering decisions on important topics for our children, their education, and all of our families.

Just as important as the decisions you make, are HOW you make these decisions, on whose behalf you make these decisions, and whose lives and voices you have in mind (and whose lives and voices you DON'T you have in mind) when you make these decisions. Please include the CYMP, CHIP and ACPS 2025--plans that have captured diverse voices and the great expertise of

our city--to help you in your deliberations and decisions about our schools' and community's future.

Thank you!

Helen Morris

Chair, Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy

Member, Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria Steering Committee

Group Leader, Children & Youth Master Plan Developmental Assets Work Group

ACPS Parent