

Mr. Elliot Waters
Public Hearing Comments
June 20, 2019
School Board Meeting

Good evening! I am here to share a viewpoint on ACPS Practices in Custodial Care.

I want to join others in thanking Superintendent Hutchings and the Board for revising the budget plan in which the 30 remaining custodial staff positions would be eliminated early. Now that the ACPS budget has been approved, I understand the plan now is to terminate 10 custodians with severance including an opportunity to be rehired as contract custodians. Although this transaction gives a reprieve to the 20, the truth is what affects one stemming from a broken promise-*not written on paper but on the hearts and minds*- affects them all.

I may be wrong, but I suspect if the 30 custodial staff members were represented by a team of “high powered connected lawyers” none would be terminated early. I say this not to hurt feelings nor wound spirits but to give voice to a perception shared by many. Given the “weak hand” the staff custodians were dealt, I had hoped that ACPS would acknowledge a need to break a promise in the form of an apology to those impacted. Such action would speak volumes as to how we do business in a city which self identifies as being one of kindness and compassion instead of “bait and switch.”

For the record and “appealing to your better angels”, I hope and pray ACPS will resolve to formally incorporate Alexandria’s shared core values [***one being “we honor our word”***] in its decision-making process. Simply put, in my view, ACPS has a duty not only to encourage and promote the pursuit of academic excellence; in like manner, it should encourage and promote moral excellence to help achieve a more just outcome...without “*taking from Peter to pay Paul.*” Given this subjective assessment, it was gratifying to learn that ACPS is consider doing an objective assessment of custodial care models to discern if a course correction needs to be made in a reasonable timeframe.

In closing, I want to join other public hearing presenters and residents in thanking you - Superintendent Hutchings along with your staff AND you school board members for your service and wish you all the best as you continue carrying out your duties. On a more personal note, I hope you don’t lose your sense of humor and continue to hone your skills in careful listening with head and heart as you help transform the Alexandria Public School System more fully into a gold standard with “*an engaging and collaborative climate that promotes ethical behavior and values diversity which all Alexandrians can take great pride.*”

GO TITANS! Thank you for listening.