

What is your relationship to ACPS? * Parent/Guardian of an ACPS Student

Full Name * Craig Stouffer

Public Hearing Date * Monday, November 14, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

I will be delivering my remarks... * Via Zoom

**Specific Topic Related to the FY 2024–
2033 CIP Budget: *** ACHS activities and athletics

Good evening, my name is Craig Stouffer, and I am an ACPS parent and the president of the Alexandria City High School Track and Field and Cross Country Boosters club. I am pleased to speak tonight on behalf of Alexandria City High's largest athletic program. In any given year, some 250 athletes participate in Titans cross country and track and field. It is the epitome of equity and inclusion - unlimited access means any student can compete. It offers equal opportunities for both boys and girls. It also has no offseason, running from August to June. In the end, that means six teams: boys and girls cross country, boys and girls winter indoor track and field, and boys and girls spring outdoor track and field.

And Titans have had success. We are the alma mater of the world's fastest man, Noah Lyles, who recently successfully defended his 200-meter title.

But while both cross country and track and field need the bare minimum of equipment, these teams remain in a perpetual state of minimal resources and funding.

Coach Michael Hughes splits a budget of \$18,000 across a staff of eight assistants and multiple unpaid volunteers, most of whom work at least two of the three seasons in a job that goes Monday through Friday in addition to weekend competitions. An ideal student to coach ratio is around 15-to-1; for the Titans it is more like 20-to-1. The program is in need of fully funded assistant coach positions that are dedicated to the gender-specific needs of the boys and girls teams.

The Titans' newly installed blue turf also overshadows a stadium project that is woefully incomplete, including a long jump pit that floods at the slightest hint of rain among drainage problems that are worse than when recent stadium renovations began.

The Titans track program supports the health, wellness and safety of ACHS students, which is why you should support a study that thoroughly reviews current ACHS venues and equipment to identify needs and opportunities to further enhance the equity and growth of sports and activities across ACHS. It is clear that there is a gap between current resources, facilities, and budgets and the evolving needs of our teams and clubs. The door is always open at Titans cross country and track; it just needs a better ability to serve those students who are walking through it.

My son and daughter have benefitted from Alexandria's diversity and offerings. My son, Emory, is a senior and has been running since 8th grade, a testament to a unique opportunity that helped his transition to high school and his road to maturity. He and Audrey, who is a 7th grader at GW, have also experienced the realities of a crumbling MacArthur Elementary and the soon-to-be obsolete Minnie Howard.

But we remain committed to Alexandria City Public Schools, and we look forward to improvements and funding that will serve the students of today and tomorrow.

Thank you.