

Public Comments for School Board Meetings

#499

I would like to provide: *

Written Public Comments

My public comments are related to: *

General Public Comments

Topic *

School Psychologist and Class

Full Name *

Jasmine Vyas

What is your relationship to ACPS? *

Parent/Guardian of an ACPS Student

Class sizes at Brooks are too large, and we are struggling to retain teachers. The school board must act to reduce the strain on teachers, including by ensuring there is adequate funding to keep class sizes manageable.

The proposed Brooks staffing budget should be changed to assign two additional homeroom teachers to Naomi L. Brooks Elementary, so that Brooks has three homeroom teachers at each grade level in FY'24.

My twin daughters experienced large class sizes, and this resulted in a scramble to get a substitute teacher to attempt to alleviate. This substitute teacher eventually disappeared by ceasing to report to work or return the principal's calls.

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This is unacceptable for Alexandria's children. They need continued engagement in school, especially after the learning loss and social isolation of the pandemic.

Secondly, Brooks needs funding for a full-time school psychologist. To maintain a positive school environment and support student mental health, this is crucial. Following the pandemic, America's children are experiencing unprecedented mental health challenges. We tell our children that treating mental health is like treating a broken bone—essential for being a healthy human.

We need to back what we know about mental health with the resources needed to support mental health in schools. I have told my children that if they are struggling with feelings or mental health, they can turn to the school psychologist,

among other trusted adults. However, with only a part-time school psychologist I fear they and other children will miss out on that safe space.

Teachers are already overburdened and quitting in droves. We cannot expect them to take the place of a mental health professional.

For these reasons, the School Board must fund a full-time school psychologist at Brooks.
