

Public Comments for School Board Meetings

#778

I would like to provide: *

In-Person Comments in the School Board Meeting Room

Select the meeting date: *

March 7, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

My public comments are related to: *

Strategic Plan: ACPS 2025

Topic *

THSP

Full Name *

Emily Yarrison

What is your relationship to ACPS? *

Staff Member

Upload a copy of your public comments or other supporting documents:



[school_board_comments.docx](#) 8.0KB · DOCX

My name is Emily Yarrison and I came to the ACHS International Academy in 2016. In that time, I have watched it be systematically dismantled. We have been pushed further from our model and the parameters set out in the contract we signed with Internationals Network of Public Schools to the point we could potentially be sued for breach of said contract. I fear this latest restructuring announcement is its swan song.

For those who are unaware, the International Academy has been put under the “Academy of General Studies.” This academy also houses Special Education. There will be one AP overseeing all of this.

It is my understanding that this means a few things:

- 1) The IA will no longer have TWO dedicated administrators who specialize in the needs of our students.
- 2) We are lumped with another department, who is also not receiving an administrator specializing in their area.

What benefit does this give ELL students and/or those in special education? Please show me any research that indicates combining two VERY high need populations into one pipeline even though they have unique and separate needs from one another is a positive thing.

I will tell you how it feels as a teacher. It feels as though the current executive principal, Dr. Duncan, cares more about the idea of pathways for the rest of the students than actually serving the needs of our highest-risk students. At the beginning of the year, the International Academy WASN'T EVEN INCLUDED in this plan! This fact was admitted to us in person by Dr. Duncan only after we called him to a meeting to ask. The international Academy is why I continue to teach in ACPS. We are becoming like any other district who underserves ELLs if we are not allowed our own pathway, our own academy, our own dedicated administration.

I have heard the rhetoric that ACHS will be “like a college with multiple campuses.” Are the principal and board aware that we are not, in fact, a university? The Academy of General Studies sounds an awful lot like the College of General Studies one is a part of before they have not yet decided their major. This CANNOT be how our high school works. Being an ELL is not a CHOICE, it is a necessity.

I am aware my comments are accusatory and incendiary. This will probably keep me out of any leadership position in the future. But I am tired of sitting back and watching my department be tossed aside and neglected yet pressured to lower the dropout rate. I am before you today asking that the International Academy remain its own entity. This is the only way we can continue to address not only the language needs of our students, but their social-emotional ones as well.

Do not let the restructuring in the name of...well, I'm not sure exactly...ego? Be the demise of one of the greatest programs in this state.

Thank you.