

Public Hearing: Collective Bargaining Resolution

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What is your relationship to ACPS? * Community Member

I am signing up to... * Speak In Person

Full Name * Dennis Michael Friel

We no longer require that you bring copies of your comments to the board meeting. Instead, we request that you upload your comments below if you have them already written. Alternately, you may email them directly to the Clerk of the Board at boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us for upload to the agenda for the public hearing and distribution to board members. When emailing comments, please use the subject PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you, tonight. I am a proud citizen of Alexandria since 1999. As a former lobbyist for the Virginia Education Association and an executive for the National Education Association, I have worked with state and local affiliates all over this nation. Collective bargaining allows educators to have a serious conversation with school management and their elected officials. If both sides bargain, in good faith, it ends top down mandates, paternalism and misunderstandings. In states, like Illinois, there is a long-standing tradition of collective bargaining. Not only does it protect the rights of educators, it protects public schools. When outside factions sought to push voucher programs that would drain money from public schools, the school board and local associations combined forces to convince state legislators that such schemes were not needed in Illinois. When outside groups tried, through a referendum, to privatize all the public schools in Manchester, New Hampshire it was the local association that mass mobilized their members and the public to soundly defeat this referendum. Prior to this organizing effort, polls showed overwhelming support for this idea. After the local association went to work, the election results saw a one hundred and eighty degree shift in the feelings of the voters. In states where collective bargaining rights are strong, student test scores are higher than non-bargaining states. Pennsylvania and Connecticut, with strong rights, score much higher than states like Mississippi and Louisiana. I have many more examples, but I think you understand the point that I am trying to make. Collective bargaining, when done right by both sides, develops mutual respect and shared values. Educators and elected leaders, when working together, provide a strong voice for public education in the community. The result is empowered educators, great public schools and a true benefit for students and parents.