

February 15, 2018
Public Hearing on the FY 2019 Combined Funds Budget
Comments of Gillie Campbell

Good evening. My name is Gillie Campbell. I am an Alexandria resident and a retired NOVA English professor. I represent Grassroots Alexandria.

I've met with many of you 1-on-1, and I appreciate your enthusiasm for caring for our children. I know you share our concern with the shockingly high number of middle school students who were pushed out of school because of suspensions - last year, 607! Racial and gender disparities are glaring, and do no credit to ACPS. At present, middle schools have no other way to deal with students' disruptions other than to suspend them. If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

Grassroots Alexandria, along with Alexandria NAACP, Tenants and Workers Union and the Advancement Project is fully committed to prompt implementation of Restorative *practices* and Justice in our middle schools. They are already successful in Oakland CA, New York City and Fairfax County, all with populations much larger than Alexandria.

Alexandria has begun to implement Restorative Justice at TC Williams; now it must be effectively and promptly implemented in our middle schools. This will take money for staff and training — even with a tight budget, this must be included and be a priority.

We will be monitoring ACPS' progress in implementing Restorative Justice practices.

Thank you.