

## **November 11, 2021 School Board Meeting**

### **Public comments**

**Dawn Lucas, President, EAA**

Good evening Chair Alderton, Vice Chair Nolan, School Board Members, Student Representatives, and Dr. Hutchings,

I would like to begin my remarks by saying Happy Veteran's Day to all military veterans and their families. Thank you for your service and the sacrifices that you have made for our country. My name is Dawn Lucas and I am a proud Special Education Teacher. I am honored to serve as the President of the Education Association of Alexandria more popularly known as EAA. I stand before you tonight in support of collective bargaining in ACPS. As some of you may know, the 2020 General Assembly amended Virginia Code to repeal the prohibition against collective bargaining for school board employees beginning May 1, 2021.

EAA believes collective bargaining is a win for our students and employees. As stated by the Virginia Education Association (VEA), our state affiliate, a contract expresses a shared set of values that can be built upon to create the best learning environment for our students and the best working environment for our educators. Prior to the passage of the law, Virginia's students and educators lacked a meaningful process to ensure that problems were identified, and commitments kept. Negotiated contracts will give us that process.

EAA believes that employees should have the right to collectively bargain with respect to matters related to wages, benefits, hours and scheduling, health and safety, evaluations, discipline and other terms and conditions of employment.

EAA believes that having the educators who work most closely with students at the table leads to better and stronger schools.

EAA believes that collective bargaining will give a genuine voice to educators about decisions that matter most to students and staff.

EAA believes that having collective bargaining will help us attract and retain the best educators.

EAA looks forward to embarking on a collaborative approach to collective bargaining with ACPS as we enter into this new way of operating. We want to work with ACPS to negotiate in good faith to create the best possible learning conditions for student and the best possible working environment for our employees. While, I suspect that we will not agree all the time, I do expect for us to work together utilizing a solutions-oriented approach.

As I close my remarks, I would encourage the School Board Members to access this link (<https://files.veanea.net/data/public/0542e5>) for more information about collective bargaining. It is our hope that you all will see the benefit of collective bargaining and how it will improve our school division for students and staff.

Thank you for your time this evening.