

Public Comments--Dave Remick
April 25, 2019 School Board Meeting

April 23, 2019

Alexandria City School Board
1340 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Madam Chair and Honorary Board Members:

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Advisory Committee for Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) would like to express our thoughts on the Connected Network High School project. Whether there will be two comprehensive high schools or multiple locations throughout the city where students are bussed, we want to ensure that all students have the opportunity to choose equitable classes to those offered at the T.C. Williams King Street campus.

It is important to note that the CTE Program in ACPS is one of the higher performing programs in the Commonwealth. The quality and variety of programs in CTE in ACPS are some of the best in Virginia. Enrollment in CTE classes has increased 12% in the past three years, and students who complete programs in CTE have a 98% pass rate on both English and math SOL tests. Furthermore, ACPS' CTE students had a 98.21% graduation rate.

Much of the success of the CTE program can be attributed to its co-location at T.C. Williams' main campus. We are concerned that if CTE's programs were scattered across the City of Alexandria, students will lose instructional time due to being transported between sites. Also, some CTE courses are taught by teachers in other disciplines, such as science, and these courses would not be able to be offered in multiple sites.

The CTE classes at T.C. Williams include students from all the demographic groups in the school. If programs were no longer located in one location some of these specific sub-groups, such as International Academy and students with disabilities, may not be able to access the courses. To sustain ACPS's CTE success, it is recommended that these programs remain at the main campus going forward.

We have concerns that off-site programs will be viewed as lesser than those at King Street and enrollment and student success will decrease. More importantly, many of the CTE programs at T.C. Williams exist in labs that have been fitted to the hardware requirements based on state curriculum policy. As an example, should the CTE programs be moved out of the main campus, then ACPS would have to pay for the establishment of a new professional culinary kitchen, audio/visual production facility, and automotive workshop. Please be aware that the expense of reestablishing many of CTE programs off the main campus would likely be cost prohibitive.

We understand and appreciate the pressures you have regarding increased student enrollments and limited instructional space. With recent economic development victories, such as Amazon HQ2 and the new Virginia Tech Innovation Campus, the role CTE plays in the City of Alexandria, as well as within the Greater Washington region, continues to grow in importance.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendation.

Sincerely,

David Remick
Chair, Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee