



Alexandria City Public Schools



# Reinventing the Titans:

## Ending Modern-Day Segregation and Creating Equity at T.C. Williams High School

2019 NSPRA Gold Medallion Award Entry  
Special Communication Projects/Campaigns

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**Type of School/Organization:**  
School district: 10,001-25,000 students

**Number of Communication staff:** 8



Please also consider this entry for Golden Achievement Award.

## SYNOPSIS

In the 2000 movie *Remember the Titans*, Disney immortalized the role of the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) 1971 high school football team, who won the Virginia state championship following the consolidation of the district's racially segregated high schools into one: T.C. Williams High School. The Titans have since developed into a national brand, symbolic of school desegregation and racial unity.

Today, T.C. Williams remains the city's only high school. Although the Alexandria community embraces the concept of diversity, many are less willing to embrace it in practice, and the vestiges of modern-day segregation still exist. Research indicated that 60 years after Alexandria first began desegregation, the community is still divided.

In July 2018, the need to resolve capacity issues at T.C. Williams created an opportunity to assess the high school experience as a whole. It also created a conflict. Key community influencers have campaigned for years for a second high school, which, given the demographics of the city, could perpetuate segregation long-term.

Analysis showed that to garner support for an equitable long-term solution to high school capacity issues, the goal would be to first challenge deep-seated attitudes about race and inequity in our community.

Harnessing current high school students — as a voice of change and symbol of future generations — and the voice of business and higher educational institutions was critical to reaching this goal. In addition, using the voice of the older African-American community and 1971 Titan football players — who lived through the creation of the one high school model 60 years ago — created a blame-free historical context to drive a conversation around race among key influencers with the most political impact.

Having achieved its initial outcomes, the campaign went on to exceed its goals. By March 2019, the concept of equity was publicly established as a foundation on which to deliver services for both city and schools, and a Northern Virginia innovation hub — a business/higher education partnership with three school districts — had been formed, establishing ACPS as an innovative leader in equity, opportunity and programming.



# RESEARCH

## Joint City-Schools Task Force Capital Project Recommendations:

In January 2018, a Joint City-Schools Task Force recommended that in order to [avoid conflict](#) and solve the capital improvement [needs of the entire city](#):

- City and schools must define an aligned vision for the future that celebrates Alexandria’s history and its unique ‘DNA,’ and embraces opportunities for innovation and growth.
- Leadership must proactively challenge traditional methods for delivering capital projects and services.
- Leadership must lead and resist substituting leadership with engagement.
- Alexandria must become an attractive owner, business partner and employer, and gain a competitive edge in the broader resource-constrained development environment.

## The Current High School Model:

The [current high school model](#) is the [result of combining](#) three segregated high schools in the 1960s. Alexandria's only high school is built on land acquired through eminent domain from the African-American community and is named after former ACPS Superintendent Thomas Chambliss Williams, a segregationist. Although viewed as one large high school with 4,000+ students, in practice it has a mix of co-located and off-campus academies and alternative programs — including a separate ninth-grade campus. [High school enrollment](#) is expected to reach 5,000 students by 2021.

The current model sees inequities in secondary talented and gifted, honors and advanced placement classes and in graduation rates. Many low income, English language learners and minority students are not graduating from T.C. Williams with the skills and knowledge they need to either join the workforce or go to college and succeed.

- 94 percent of White students graduate; 87 percent pursue higher education
- 90 percent of African-American students graduate; 71 percent pursue higher education
- 69 percent of Hispanic students graduate; 45 percent pursue higher education
- 74 percent of economically disadvantaged students graduate; 60 percent pursue higher education

## Public Opinion:

Research shows the city split almost equally over the highly contentious issue of one or two high schools.

A small influential group of teachers, the [Capacity Committee](#), has [repeatedly written](#) to the media and [city council](#) petitioning for a second high school. They have the ear of at least two school board members. The Alexandria Times, the voice of the highly-engaged community, has maintained this opinion in editorials and coverage since 2013, and has led a campaign to [change the name of the school](#). Staff focus groups, surveys and letters to the media and school board indicate that staff is adverse to change and would prefer a second high school over the academy model.

Extensive focus groups and surveys indicate that students, [business leaders and leaders of higher educational institutions](#) prefer a program-focused solution. They view the future of the high school as possibly virtual, specialized and workforce oriented. Research into the learning and work styles of future generations supports these primary research findings. The 2000 Disney movie *Remember the Titans* was based on the T.C. Williams Titans 1971 champion football team and is a source of pride for the younger generation, for current students, minority students and English-learner students, and the new superintendent who graduated from T.C. Williams in 1995. Student focus groups and survey results found students view T.C. Williams as large and disconnected but welcome the opportunities such size provides. They prefer the new “academy” structure introduced in 2017 that provides additional student supports and makes the school environment feel smaller. The older generation in the African-American community — reliving the desegregation of Alexandria in its 60th anniversary year — wants to avoid any solution that could result in re-segregating the city and has [not forgiven the school division for past wrongs](#).

## Reputation of ACPS:

Data from the ACPS 2020 surveys in [2016](#) and [2017](#) showed:

- A decrease in those who rated ACPS schools as excellent/good from 2015-16 (67 percent) to 2016-17 (63 percent).
- A decline in those who believed ACPS takes the necessary steps to continually improve from 80 percent in 2015-16 to 74 percent in 2016-17.
- Research conducted for the Joint City-Schools Long Range Plan in 2014-15 found that between 1980 and 2014, Alexandria had a lower percentage of families who chose to stay in the city and enroll their children in ACPS compared to neighboring divisions. Forty to 45 percent of Alexandria families opt to move away prior to enrolling in kindergarten

— 10 percent higher than Arlington, 20 percent higher than Fairfax, and 30 percent higher than Prince William County. High school capture rates for recent years have been: 112.1 percent (2015-16), 116.8 percent (2016-17), 128.9 percent (2017-18).

### **Reputation of ACPS Facilities:**

The highly engaged community, including city council, has trust issues with the ACPS Department of Facilities after ongoing issues related to transparency and accountability over the past eight years. Data from the ACPS 2020 surveys in [2016](#) and [2017](#) showed:

- A nine percentage point decrease in participants who said ACPS had a positive public image between 2016 and 2017, alongside a 300 percent increase in negative media coverage of facilities issues for the same period..
- A decline in those who believed ACPS makes good decisions that support education and student learning from 75 percent in 2015-16 to 66 percent in 2016-17.
- The biggest decrease was in response to efficient, effective and transparent business operations.
- Open-ended response themes included wanting to see school facilities managed better.
- The 2017 TELL (Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning) Survey, which records teachers' views of ACPS, indicated that 26 percent of teachers thought that the physical environment in schools did not support teaching and learning needs.

### **Budget and Land Availability:**

- Fifteen million dollars has been approved for design and planning work in the [2019-20 budget](#), with \$103m for space in 2020-21. [Estimates](#) for building a comprehensive high school are in the region of \$212m.
- Analysis shows that landlocked Alexandria does not have space for a new [409,000 square ft.](#) high school.
- Recent practice has been to buy and [retrofit](#) smaller office building instead of building from scratch.

### **Future Trends:**

'Let's Talk' survey data shows that the key factors influencing families' decisions to stay or leave public school at the middle school/high school level were: insufficient student and teacher connectedness, insufficient programming, preference for small settings, concerns related to safety/bullying, and a desire for stronger academic rigor.

The [World Economic Forum](#) suggests that students will [learn differently](#) and [need different skills](#) in the future. Eighteen [exemplar schools](#) were found, although none corresponded completely with the situation at T.C. Williams.

## **GOAL**

**To deliver support for innovative and equitable high school capacity solutions and educational programming in Alexandria that will result in ACPS being viewed as a trusted leader in delivering educational services.**

## **OBJECTIVES**

To have a deep and lasting impact on the schools and city, objectives needed to be aligned with the goals outlined in the Joint City-Schools Task Force established in January 2018.

### **Outcome Objective 1**

**To sufficiently shift the community towards alternatives to constructing a second high school as a solution to the high school capacity issues so that by January 2019 the school board feels confident publicly endorsing the superintendent's recommendation for a more equitable high school model.**

This will be measured through the result of the school board vote on the superintendent's recommendation in January.

### **Outcome Objective 2**

**Alexandria City Public Schools will be viewed as a trusted leader for delivering innovative programming in line with workforce needs in the Northern Virginia region by February 2019.**

This will be measured through the evaluation of the positions of key community leaders, the public endorsement of higher education partners and sentiment of media coverage by March 2019.

# PLANNING/ANALYSIS

## Audience Identification, Profile and Analysis

The audience is identified by their role in the process, as a decision maker (D), a stakeholder (S) or influencer (I).

The key decision-making audience is the **school board (D)**, of which five of the new board members ran on a platform of a second high school/capacity. The second decision-making audience is the **city manager, mayor and city council (D)**, who need to vote to support the project financially in order for it to move forward.

Both of these groups are influenced by **Alexandria business owners (S)**, **local colleges and universities (I, S)**, **local media (I)**, and **T.C. Williams' immediate neighbors** — elderly African-Americans badly treated in the 1960s by superintendent T.C. Williams. In addition, the school board is influenced by **ACPS teachers and staff (S/I)** and **ACPS parents and families (S/I)**, especially highly-engaged parents (typically white, middle class), many of whom expect to be decision-makers and have actively campaigned for a second high school.

## Timeline

The five-month timeline from launch to the decision point (August 2018-February 2019) is restricted by the need for a decision prior to the presentation of the Capital Improvement Program and the city manager's budget presentation in February 2019.

## Output Objectives

**To achieve the outcomes, ACPS Office of Communications will need four output objectives.**

- #1 Deliver fresh content each week devoted to challenging issues of race, equity, diversity and inclusion to be carried across all communications channels throughout the campaign (September-March 2019).
- #2 Hold in excess of 60 separate engagement sessions with all audiences during the research, implementation and circle-back/evaluation stages in the five months of the campaign to capture the voice of the entire community without valuing one part above another.
- #3 Deliver regular high-profile demonstrations of superintendent ownership between July 2018 and February 2019.
- #4 Engage ten percent of all high school students so that the campaign is driven by student voices, while remaining superintendent-led.

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Strategy 1: Inform

**Inform the community about the process, set expectations and keep the community updated, in addition to promoting the benefits of the Connected High School Network**

- Video, social media and community meetings through which the student voice is shared with the community
- Positive facts campaign around the Connected High School Network and lack of land options for a second comprehensive high school
- Media appearances at key decision points by the superintendent on a National Public Radio talk show
- Regular background briefings and briefing notes sent directly to reporters on the two local newspapers
- Project website with community meetings and focus group postings, updates, background and a timeline
- Flier about the benefits of the Connected High School Network

## Strategy 2: Public Opinion

**Support the idea of future change with the concept that ACPS can be trusted: We know what we are doing**

- Capitalize on the change of superintendent to create the sense of a fresh start for ACPS in terms of facilities management, and access and opportunity to programming
- Broadcast regular superintendent podcasts to ensure the public is aware of the project's leadership
- Ensure new superintendent media interviews and op-eds cover The High School Project
- Ensure superintendent leads all major presentations to the school board in person

- Promote stories that support the idea of a fresh start in terms of fiscal responsibility and facilities management
- Promote stories focused on academics to keep the media focused on student success
- Publicize success stories connected to ACPS' existing academy programs

### **Strategy 3: Student Voice/Engagement**

#### **Use the student voice to lead and drive the conversation**

- Capture student voices on video at the start of the project and continue to use throughout
- Engage students in driving the discussion through student focus groups, classroom sessions, the use of a video booth, graffiti boards and middle school student council sessions
- Enroll student school board representatives in the goal of the project early on so that they enroll other students

### **Strategy 4: Key Influencers**

#### **Use key influencers in the community to help drive discussion and support for the project from the highly engaged group in the community**

- Capture the voices of local business and higher education leaders on video as a way of driving the conversation at community sessions and on social media
- Capture supporting research data from business/higher-ed institutions around future workforce needs
- Secure and promote the endorsement of ACPS' Connected High School Network by the **president of Virginia Tech** at the high profile media launch of the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus as part of the Amazon deal; the **Governor of Virginia, Virginia Department of Education** and **President of George Washington University** at the launch of the Health Sciences Academy; the **president of Northern Virginia Community College** at the business leaders forum; the **head of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce** and **Alexandria Economic Consortium** (responsible for the Amazon/Virginia Tech deal) through the business leaders forum and Superintendent's 100-Day Transition Team; the **head of Alexandria's Preschool Directors Network**

### **Strategy 5: Equitable Community Engagement**

#### **Deliberate broad community outreach to ensure the outcome is not driven by, nor solely serves, the highly engaged community**

- Community engagement conducted in the style of gathering feedback rather than asking a few members the highly engaged community to be the key decision-makers.
- Town hall sessions using the student/business leaders voices videos, with interpretation (Arabic, Amharic, Spanish), childcare and food, scheduled to increase accessibility for families without English as a first language
- Wide-scale community engagement through previously established community sessions (Family and Community Engagement (FACE) workshops/parents engagement sessions, apartment and civic association meetings, community leadership sessions)
- Survey conducted in four languages based on the community's vision of the future high school experience, rather than capacity or building space
- Superintendent conducted private meetings with key influencers as an alternative to community meetings

### **Strategy 6: Public Equity Discussion**

#### **Simultaneously spark public debate about the modern day segregation/inequity through an historical lens to ensure there is no blame and that equity is front and center when decisions are made around the project.**

- Position stories, social media and video wholesale in print media owning our story
- Place monthly (and sometimes bi-monthly) superintendent op-eds focused on equity, the high school project and equity, and his goals and objectives around the project in local print media
- Design mural for new school depicting the path to desegregation with help of African-American community
- Promote diverse student success through VOICES series, video, media and social media
- Challenge stereotypes; reverse stereotyping through images
- Connect and tap into the African-American community leadership within Alexandria to enable ACPS to tell the story of modern day segregation through a historical lens

## Strategy 7: Staff Engagement

**As much as the superintendent needs a flagship project on which to establish his reputation, his staff needs to see him lead this project and thereby lead them. This ensures his place in the division and staff feel that he is an accessible leader who listens.**

- Superintendent leads virtually all staff engagement directly to indicate his leadership and support of the project
- Survey staff around the vision for the high school and their fears about what it might mean
- Project team regularly engages staff in staff meetings and lunch time brown bag sessions
- Superintendent invites key influencers in opposition to the project to meet with him in a small group setting
- Staff are repeatedly assured that they will play a key role in program design

## Strategy 8: Branding

**Brand the campaign so that its purpose is visually represented and easily identifiable.**

- Design a logo representing the future, diversity and the potential impact of the campaign on the city
- Design and create t-shirts for T.C. Williams students reflecting the discussion around equity in an historic context so that students market the value of the campaign

# EVALUATION

## Outcome Objective 1

**To sufficiently shift the community towards alternatives to constructing a second high school as a solution to the high school capacity issues so that by January 2019 the school board feels confident publicly endorsing the superintendent's recommendation for a more equitable high school model.**

Due to the project's compressed timeline, the former board had not sufficiently shifted their mindset away from capacity to ensure approval through a vote in December. A vote against the project would have damaged the public image of the new superintendent. Therefore, the decision was made to extend the timeline for the vote for an additional month so that new board who had run on a campaign for a second comprehensive high school had time to fully understand the implications. On January 24, 2019, the board voted unanimously in favor of the Connected High School Network strategy, but included a request to use the existing ninth-grade campus as part of the plan. Ultimately, this compromise saw the model win public endorsement and shored up the public position of the superintendent. Following the vote, contentious media coverage and emails fell away and even the most outspoken opposition sent emails of support to the superintendent. This included T.C. staff, who largely united around the decision. Closing-the-loop sessions were had with each audience.

- The Capacity Committee, consisting of second high school supporters and T.C. Williams staff, sent letters of support to the superintendent following the vote.
- There was a 72 percent positive change in the sentiment of media coverage of The High School Project and the Connected High School Network between August 2018 and March 2019.

## Outcome Objective 2

**Alexandria City Public Schools will be viewed as a trusted leader for delivering innovative programming in line with workforce needs in the Northern Virginia region by February 2019.**

By February 2019, key stakeholders, including the city council members, the city manager, community leaders, business leaders and, most critically, our new partner, Virginia Tech, were aligned in support of the superintendent's recommendation for the Connected High School model. The city manager publicly agreed that he needed to increase Capital Improvement Program funding for the high school in the future.

In late February 2019, Virginia Tech and ACPS began to actively explore opportunities to capitalize on Amazon's arrival through programming at Virginia Tech's proposed Innovation Campus in Alexandria, while Northern Virginia Community College and ACPS moved to initiate an Early College program.

In February, neighboring school divisions approached ACPS to explore the possibility of expanding the Connected High School Network across the region, potentially giving ACPS students access to college-level programming options currently only open to students in those divisions.

## Output Objective 1

**Deliver fresh content each week devoted to challenging issues of race, equity, diversity and inclusion to be carried across all communications channels throughout the campaign (September-March 2019).**

- Thirty independent stories and two op-eds focused on equity pushed out to the community via all ACPS communication channels and to the media.
- Seven posts specifically highlighting inequalities from a historical perspective using the Brown v. Board anniversary were published in ACPS Express, on social media and in a local newspaper, *The Zebra*.
- 9,271 active engagements and 115,128 impressions on Facebook and Twitter for historical Brown v. Board posts directly connected to race and equity
- Media coverage of equity issues increased by 74 percent over the period from July 2018 to February 2019.
- A key local paper offered ACPS the chance to guest-write the February edition, increasing our ability to tell our own story around the issue of race and reach 30,000 homes.
- The issue of race — and particularly a discussion sparked by the critical timing of the Titans race video the week before the vote — directly impacted the way four board members voted.
- The city manager publicly talked about equity and the need to increase funding to increase support equity in schools across the city for the first time ever in his budget presentation on February 21.

## Output Objective 2

**Hold in excess of 60 separate engagement sessions across the areas of research, implementation and circle-back/evaluation in the five months of the campaign to capture the voice of the entire community without valuing one part over another.** Sixty+ different engagement sessions with all audiences were held at three designated stages of research, implementation and evaluation. 480 responses to the survey balanced across all four languages.

## Output Objective 3

**Deliver regular high-profile demonstrations of superintendent ownership between July 2018 and February 2019.** The superintendent remained at the forefront of the project throughout: Ten op-eds in the two local papers over the five month period, three television interviews, two *Washington Post* interviews, two high-profile appearances on NPR's *The Kojō Nnamdi Show*, two personal presentations to the school board, three podcasts, two personal letters to staff, two personal letters to parents and the community, and eight superintendent-led staff meetings and two community meetings.

## Output Objective 4

**Engage ten percent of all high school students so that the campaign is driven by student voices, while remaining superintendent-led.** More than 400 students were engaged in 40 separate classroom sessions; 62 students were further engaged in in-depth focus groups; three student video voice sessions were conducted; graffiti boards were established to collect feedback; five student council sessions discussed the issues; student leadership was enrolled early.

## OVERALL GOAL

The campaign resulted in heightened conversation around equity across the city that acted as a platform from which to launch discussions around the delivery of high school programming. The combined voices of current students and '71 Titans once again challenged the status quo and demonstrated the power of student voice, while allowing the superintendent to retain leadership of the project and establish ACPS as a regional leader for delivering innovative programming in line with workforce needs.

## Next Steps and Improvements:

1. Evaluation of public trust in the school division and the superintendent's image as a result of his leadership of the campaign/project will continue to be assessed via the April 2019 strategic plan survey.
2. The communications plan will now be adjusted to suit the implementation phase of the plan, while keeping the key messaging intact until 2023, when the project is due to be completed.
3. This spring, the Titans Connected campaign will launch in earnest at T.C. Williams High School.
4. The evaluation revealed our own anxiety around this topic. This part of the campaign concerned with race and equity was too subtle at the start and only started to have an impact once tackled head on.
5. The conversation around race and equity will be extended into the 2025 Strategic Plan starting in April 2019.



# RESEARCH

## Focus Groups with Staff and Students

Students were asked to take part in focus groups in which they responded to short videos on innovative learning practices, documented personal learning styles, and discussed future learning. Staff members were asked to reflect on their teaching experience within ACPS and provide their greatest hopes and biggest fears for the future of the division.

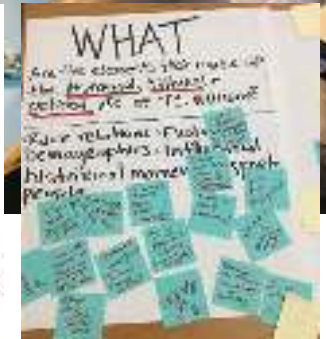


### Staff Hopes...

Individualization student choice  
 expansion of TC  
**college career focused**  
 hands on experience in community  
 beyond high school  
**alternative programs**

### Staff Fears...

Curriculum direction of program  
**No action Too slow to act**  
 No new school  
 Continued disconnect between campuses  
 Too skill focused less acquisition focused  
**Re-segregation inequity**  
 but need in individualized learning academies  
**Emphasis on testing over critical thinking**  
 Loss of our high school identity  
 Expanded TC environment does not support relationships



### Graffiti Boards



Large  
**Global** Workforce  
 Opportunity Choice  
 Functional Flexibility Online  
**College-focused**  
 Career-focused Finance  
 Media Arts Broad  
 Skills Science Analytical Arts Broad  
**Natural** Skilled Specialized Skills  
**Individualized** Science  
 Public Private Partners Priority social  
 Research Analytical Science Innovation Jobs  
 Creative Learning Experience Multiple  
 Practical experience  
 Sustainable Skills Technical Workforce  
**Unconnected**  
 Technology

# RESEARCH

## Community/Business Leader Research

At public town hall meetings and private focus groups, community members and higher education leaders were asked what the future of high school could look like in Alexandria. A community survey also gathered feedback on the future of education and on the project as a whole.



**40+**  
STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

**400+**  
ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES

### The High School Project

**Inspiring A Future for Alexandria**

Alexandria City Public Schools is in the process of redefining the high school experience for future generations of Alexandrians to meet the future business needs of the D.C. metro region and address the challenges of a growing student enrollment.

Find out more about The High School Project.

[en español |](#)  
[AMN | العربية](#)

**What is your role? (Select all that apply.) \***

- I am a student.
- I am a family member.
- I am an educator.
- I am an employee of ACPS.
- I just care.

**In the future, the high school experience should be:**

**When people hear, "Alexandria," they should think of:**

**When you imagine the high school experience of the future, what does it include?**

**The workforce in the year 2030 and beyond will need:**

**What is most important to you? Select your top three.**

- Online/remote learning

# RESEARCH

## Public Opinion

Research showed the city split almost equally in two over the highly contentious issue of one or two high schools. Further, the older generation in the African-American community was uncomfortable with the concept of re-segregating the city, was averse to the high school being named after a segregationist, and had not forgiven the school division for taking their land by eminent domain to make way for the high school in 1965.



Aminta Wood, Andrea Mackey, Calvin Terrell, Frances Colbert Terrell and Phyllis Burkes stand at the chain link fence in Burkes' backyard that separates her property from the T.C. Williams football field. All five are descendants of Seminary community residents dating to at least the mid-1800s. There are 17 descendant families remaining in the neighborhood, several from the Wanzer and Terrell families, members of which are pictured below. PHOTO: NISSY SCHOTT

# The history beneath T.C. Williams



### Last Week

What should the school board's priority be when it votes on the T.C. Williams capacity issue?

- 10% A programmatic approach.
- 6% Immediate capacity for the 2019-2020 school year.
- 20% A Winnie Howard rebuild.
- 52% A second, comprehensive high school.**
- 4% Something else.
- 2% I'm not sure.

## Our View Should Alexandria's high school bear the name 'T.C. Williams?'

We are in the midst of a national conversation concerning who should be memorialized with statues or by having their names on street signs, buildings and parks.

Our first president, George Washington, a native son of Alexandria, is even being viewed with a fresh, critical eye. Last year, Alexandria's historic Christ Church decided to remove Washington's plaque, along with one of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, from its sanctuary.

Whether to remove the names of Confederate leaders from Alexandria street signs is also under review, and some street names are likely to be changed. "The Aggonistock," the statue of a weary, defeated Confederate soldier at the intersection of South Washington and Prince streets is another potential target for removal.

We think the general conversation is good, though we don't advocate tossing aside all remembrances of past leaders because they were flawed. Whether to change names or remove statues should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

A triumphant statue of a Confederate soldier on a battle horse seems different than a statue of a defeated foot soldier, at least to us — though we recognize it may not be to others. It's important to remember that there is a wide range of opinions on historic figures, and that no one has the market corner on the absolute truth on this controversial topic.

As our front page story this week, "A cook's forgotten civil rights stand," illustrates, perhaps it's time to add another name to the discussion about who should and shouldn't be so honored: Thomas Chambers — better known as "T.C." — Williams. His opposition to



### Last Week

Should the name T.C. Williams stay on the high school or be removed?

- 49% Leave it. The whole world knows it from the movie.
- 51% Change it. There are many more deserving people to honor on the high school.**

# RESEARCH

## Future Trends in Education

Research suggests students will learn differently and need different skills in the future. Eighteen “exemplar” schools were identified whose models aligned with future trends and desired skills: complex problem solving, critical thinking, and creativity. These were combined with the values identified by our stakeholders.

### Trends in Contemporary High School Learning

#### Out-of-Building Learning Experiences:

Off-campus field studies, internships, apprenticeships

*Pictured: The Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical High School (“The Met”), Providence, RI*



#### Hybrid Learning:

Virtual and face-to-face individualized learning programs

*Pictured: T.C. Satellite Campus Faculty, Alexandria City Public Schools*

#### Authentic and Experiential Learning:

Project-based learning, community connections

*Pictured: Crosstown High School, Memphis, TN*



#### Thematic Career-based Learning Centers:

Purpose-built facilities for interdisciplinary studies in industry themes — e.g. Business, Medical Sciences, Design and Engineering, Human Service Professions, and STEM

*Pictured: Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS), Overland Park, KS*

#### Personalized Learning & Pathways:

High degree of student voice and choice throughout learning process

*Pictured: Albemarle County Public Schools, Charlottesville, VA*



#### Global Studies and World Languages:

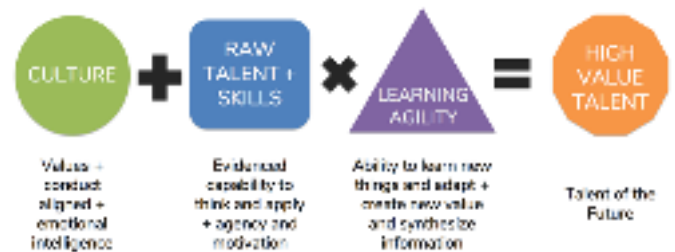
*Pictured: Academy of Global Studies (AGS), Cincinnati, OH*

#### Why Learn? | The Top 10 Skills



In 2020	In 2015
1. Complex Problem Solving	1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Critical Thinking	2. Coordinating with Others
3. Creativity (increased priority)	3. People Management
4. People Management	4. Critical Thinking
5. Coordinating with Others	5. Negotiation
6. Emotional Intelligence (new)	6. Quality Control
7. Judgment and Decision Making	7. Service Orientation
8. Service Orientation	8. Judgment and Decision Making
9. Negotiation	9. Active Listening
10. Cognitive Flexibility (new)	10. Creativity

#### The New Formula for Work



Research / The Future of High School Learning + Global and Regional Context +  
What makes Alexandria unique + ACPS Stakeholders + Community Engagement

= an Emerging ACPS Educational Vision:

#### 3 Distinct Values



Community  
Connected



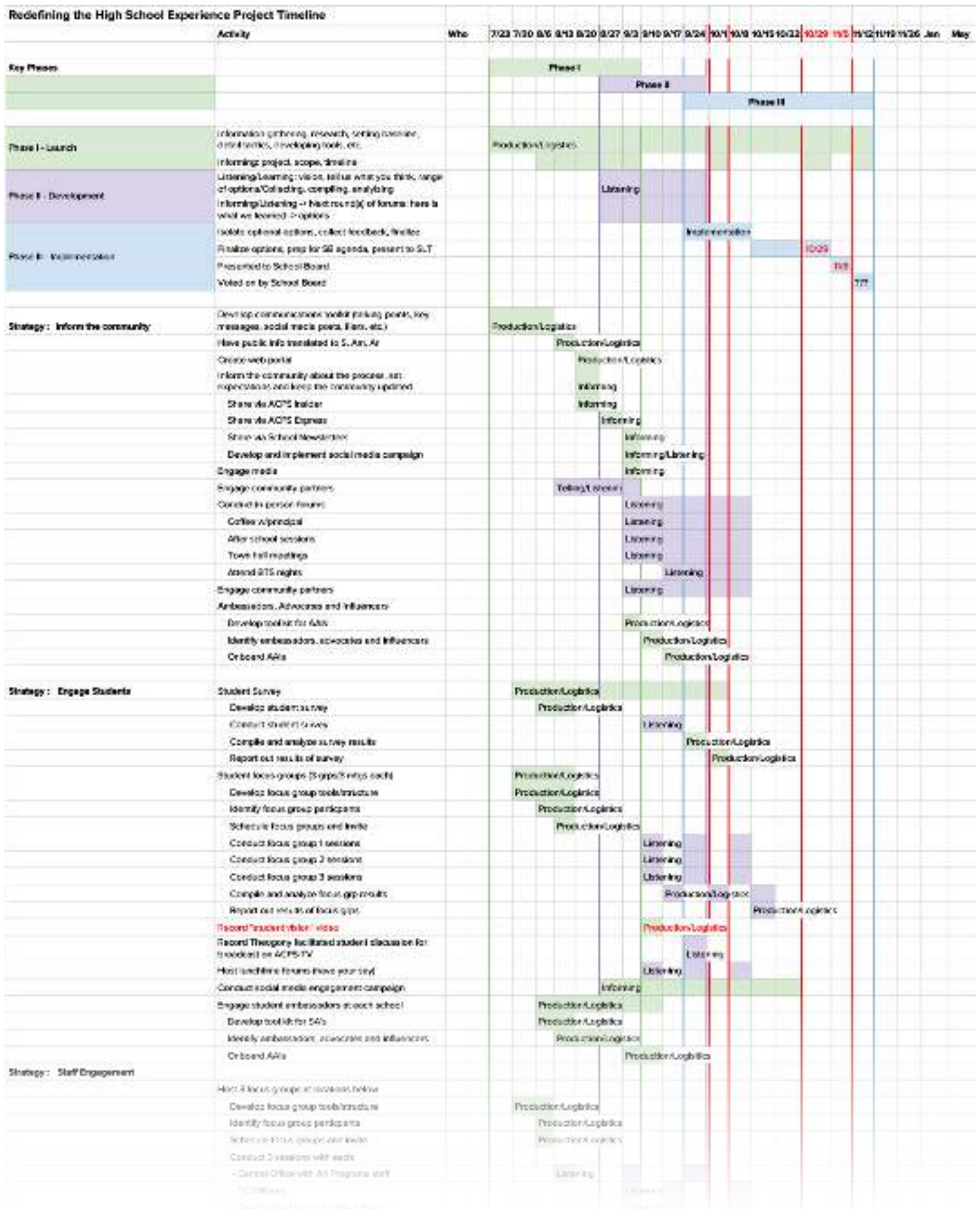
Diversity  
as Strength



Experiential  
Learning

# PLANNING/ANALYSIS

## Timeline



# IMPLEMENTATION

## Branding Strategy

A visual identity was created to make all High School Project communications easily identifiable. A logo was designed to reflect the school district's existing visual branding.



### Alexandria City Public Schools High School Capacity : Logo Concepts

### The High School Project Logo Usage Guidelines

FONTS:  
1. BANK MILES SINGLE  
2. MYRIAD PRO BLACK

KEY WORDS: MOVEMENT. GROWTH. DIVERSITY.

SLOGANS:  
DEFINING THE FUTURE FOR ALEXANDRIA.  
INSPIRING A FUTURE FOR ALEXANDRIA.

INSPIRATION:



**EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS**  
ACPS 2020

COLOR PALETTE:



CONCEPT #1A



CONCEPT #1B



CONCEPT #2A



CONCEPT #2B



CONCEPT #3A



CONCEPT #3B



### Approved Variations and Usage



Square



Without Text



Reversed on Solid Colors - White



Grayscale and Black

On Uncluttered Photo Background



### Colors

**Orange**  
Pantone 804 C  
C:0 M:49 Y:88 K:0  
R:248 G:150 B:57  
HEX #F89639

**Green**  
Pantone 7489 C  
C:58 M:17 Y:79 K:1  
R:120 G:166 B:97  
HEX #78A661

**ACPS Blue**  
Pantone 313  
C:98 M:2 Y:10 K:9  
R:0 G:157 B:201  
HEX #009637

**Dark Blue**  
Pantone 7687 C  
C:100 M:89 Y:10 K:1  
R:36 G:64 B:143  
HEX #24408F

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Inform Strategy

Audiences were kept informed through a project website, articles in the district email newsletter, social media, and a podcast.

### THE HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT: INSPIRING A FUTURE FOR ALEXANDRIA

- Home
- Project Updates
- Calendar
- Current ACPS High School Programs
- The History of Alexandria's High Schools
- Guiding Documents and Resources
- Project Partners
- Project Recommendation FAQ
- The High School Project Podcast

PARENTS & STUDENTS

NEW TO ACPS

### Project Updates



#### February 21, 2019 - School Board Meeting

The Board was updated on the next steps in the High School Project, including an outline of the timeline to design programming and assessment of potential sites.

- [Review The High School Project Strategy Vision \(PDF\)](#)
- [Presentations: The High School Project Work Plan \(PDF\)](#)
- [Watch video of the work session](#)

## ACPS Express

News from  
Alexandria City  
Public Schools

### Educational Vision for the Future High School Presented to the School Board

Learn about the recommendation to the School Board on Thursday for an educational vision based on findings from community, staff and student listening sessions over the past four months, as presented by the project team from The High School Project: Inspiring a Future for Alexandria.



### ACPS High School Project Town Hall Meetings

Public - Hosted by Alexandria City Public Schools and Alexandria City Public Schools - In Person

Alexandria City Public Schools @ Alexandria City Public Schools · November 15, 2018 · 444

This week Dr. Hollings will be recommending a "connected high school network" as the option for the future of high school in Alexandria. Listen to the High School Project podcast to find out what this means and why it is recommended.

Subscribe to the podcast: <https://www.alexandriapublicschools.org/highschoolproject>

#thehighschoolproject



THE HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT

01: The High School Project Podcast  
Feb 15, 2019

THE HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT

02: Is Alexandria ready for a connected high school network?  
Jan 7

THE HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT

03: What the January 24 Vote Means for ACPS  
Jan 7

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Inform Strategy

The superintendent's recommended Connected High School Network was promoted with an FAQ flier and social media. The superintendent and chief operating officer made multiple appearances on a regional NPR radio show to discuss the project and opportunities on the way with the arrival of the new Amazon HQ2.

**INSPIRING A FUTURE FOR ALEXANDRIA**

**ACPS**  
Alexandria City Public Schools

### THE HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT: RECOMMENDED STRATEGY

# A CONNECTED HIGH SCHOOL NETWORK

**What is the recommendation?**

Superintendent Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. is recommending that ACPS formally adopt a connected high school network model. This means enhancing the campus

ACPS planning is underway in areas that mirror the connected high school network model:

- In fall 2021, ACPS will be launching the ACPS/Northern Virginia Community College program on the main NOVA

**Alexandria City Public Schools** @ACPSVA • Jan 18  
Listen to the High School Project Podcast episode 8 on our new podcast about a "connected high school network" and why it's the most needed option for the future of high schools in Alexandria. [#ACPSVA](#) [#HighSchoolProject](#)

**Alexandria City Public Schools** @ACPSVA • Jan 20  
Discover why Fall's connected high school network, which is what Dr. Hutchings is recommending for the future of high schools in Alexandria, offers a number of learning advantages & benefits to high schools.

**Alexandria City Public Schools** @ACPSVA • Jan 9  
ACPS is currently recommending a "connected high school network" for the future of high schools in Alexandria, VA. This model offers a number of learning advantages & benefits to high schools. [#ACPSVA](#) [#HighSchoolProject](#)

**Connected High School Network:**  
One of more buildings or spaces linked to one from a network of T.C. Williams High School.

- Each building has one focused program or long-term area of study or one related interdisciplinary program.
- Programs share space and benefit from shared learning objectives, activities or specialized instruction.

*Scoutdale, T.C. Williams Public High Campus*

- Better attendance rates
- Stronger academic achievement, especially for low-income students and students of color
- Lower dropout rates
- Personalization
- Continuous relationships

**How Alexandria City Public Schools Is Planning To Solve Its Overcrowding Problem**

Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr.

[View on Facebook](#)

**Alexandria City Public Schools** @ACPSVA • November 20, 2019 • 45

Listen to Dr. Hutchings on The Kojin Nnamdi Show today discussing our partnership with Virginia Tech and its benefits for ACPS and Alexandria.

**THE SHOW IS NOW ON VIDEO**

**The Pipeline From Schools To Tech Jobs: What HQ2 Means For Education In Our Region - The Kojin Nnamdi Show**





# IMPLEMENTATION

## Public Opinion Strategy

Stories were pushed to the media that focused on facilities improvements, academic achievement, fiscal responsibility, and trust.

# Patrick Henry gets an upgrade

**Redeveloped school, rec center open doors**

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Students rushed through the doors of the new Patrick Henry School with smiles on their faces and a spring in their steps on Jan. 23, their first day in the newly redeveloped kindergarten through eighth grade school.

The Patrick Henry School and Recreation Center is the result of a joint project between the city and Alexandria City Public Schools



### Ferdinand T. Day opens its doors

**City's first new school in 15 years** opens its doors to students and staff on Jan. 23. The new school, named for Ferdinand T. Day, is the result of a joint project between the city and Alexandria City Public Schools. The school is the first new school in 15 years.

### ACPS launches partnership with G.W. University

**Virginia Deputy Secretary of Education calls collaboration a "shining example"**  
BY MARGHERITA

A select group of incoming T.C. Williams students are preparing to spend their four years of high school immersed in the medical field.

They are the inaugural class of the GW-ACPS Academy of Health Sciences.



Dr. Howard (left) and Kelli Howard (right) speak with their research on the role of a Physician Assistant, which was conducted during the GW-ACPS Academy of Health Sciences Summer Bridge Program.

### Named for a Civil Rights Icon, Ferdinand T. Day School Wins Creative Design Award

**W**ashington, D.C. (AP) — The new Ferdinand T. Day School, named for a Civil Rights icon, has won a Creative Design Award for its architecture. The school is the first new school in 15 years.



### Filling in the Blanks with Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Ed.D. Rebuilding trust starts now

Trust is a word that is often used to describe the relationship between a school and its community. It is a word that is often used to describe the relationship between a school and its community. It is a word that is often used to describe the relationship between a school and its community.



### 'Welcome to your new classroom'

Students are excited to welcome their new Patrick Henry School for the first time on January 23. After a year and a half of uncertainty, the new school and new curriculum opened its doors to the community and its students.

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Student Voice Strategy

Student voices and images were captured on video at the start of the project and were continued to be used throughout. Student school board representatives were brought on board with the goal of the project early on so they would influence others. T-shirts with the phrase "Titans Connected Since 1971" were distributed to students to reinforce the idea of being a community connected by Titan pride, and the unity of the 1971 Titans.



**"I'm really excited and optimistic about the opportunity that the Connected High School Network provides to improve and increase our educational programming,"** — school board Student Representative Bridget Williams



# THEN NOW

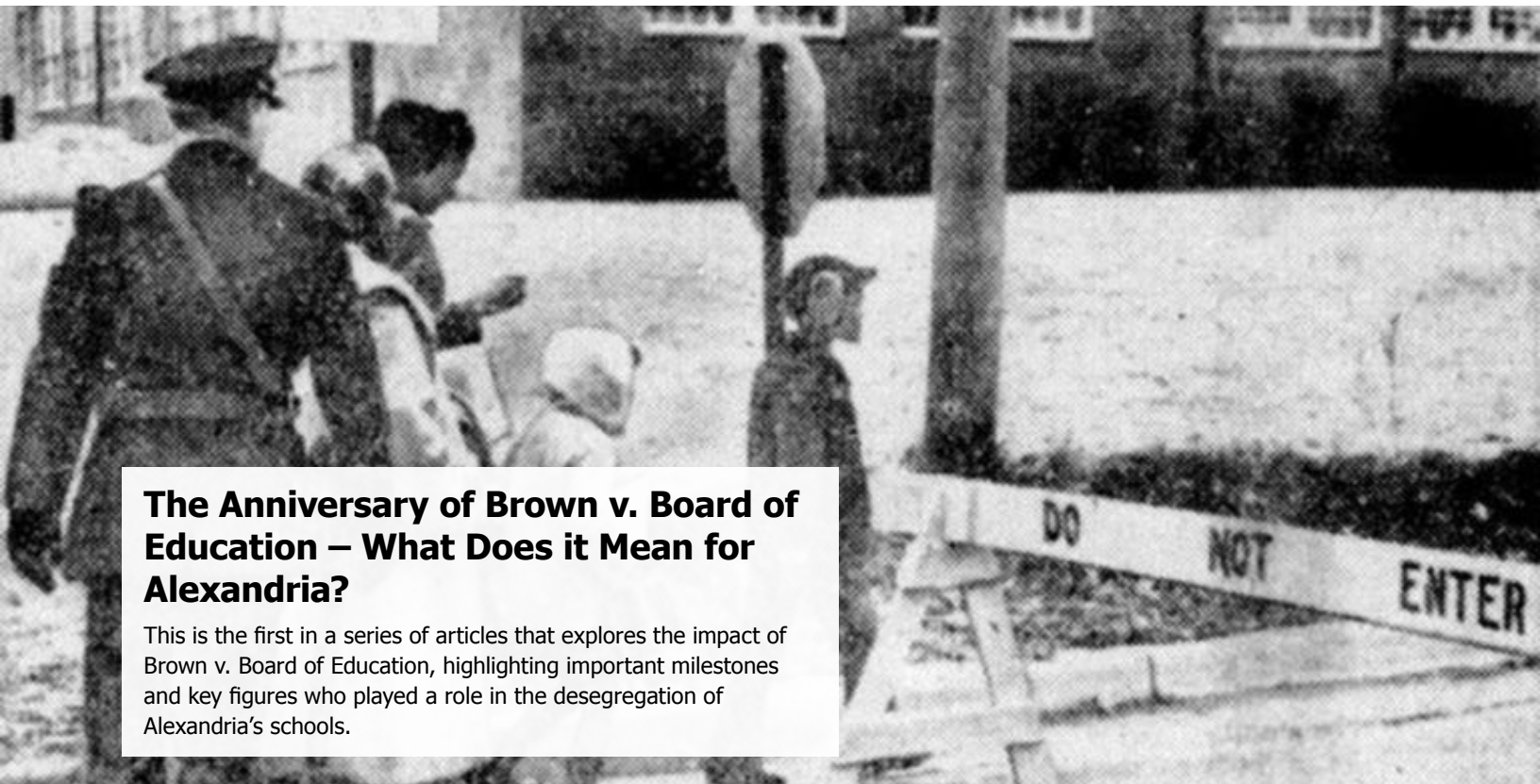




# IMPLEMENTATION

## Equity Discussion Strategy

In an effort to spark discussion about race and equity, we created and publicized a series of four articles to highlight the history of Alexandria's desegregation.



### The Anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education – What Does it Mean for Alexandria?

This is the first in a series of articles that explores the impact of Brown v. Board of Education, highlighting important milestones and key figures who played a role in the desegregation of Alexandria's schools.



### Brown v. Board and Football: Both a Problem and a Solution

Athletics has always been a source of pride and tension in the story of the desegregation of ACPS. This is the second article in a series that explores the impact of Brown v. Board of Education on our schools and community, highlighting important milestones and key figures who played a role in the desegregation of Alexandria's schools 65 years on.



### Brown v. Board: 60 Years On – The Action that Took 14 Years to Complete

On a damp grey morning at 8:15 a.m. on February 10, 1959 — exactly 60 years ago this week — two African-American school children walked across a line of 58 police officers to become the first black students at an all-white elementary school in Alexandria. On the other side of town, three other African-American children walked into the all-white William Ramsay School. Their actions were the start of a long, slow process to desegregate Alexandria City Public Schools — a process that took another 14 years to complete.



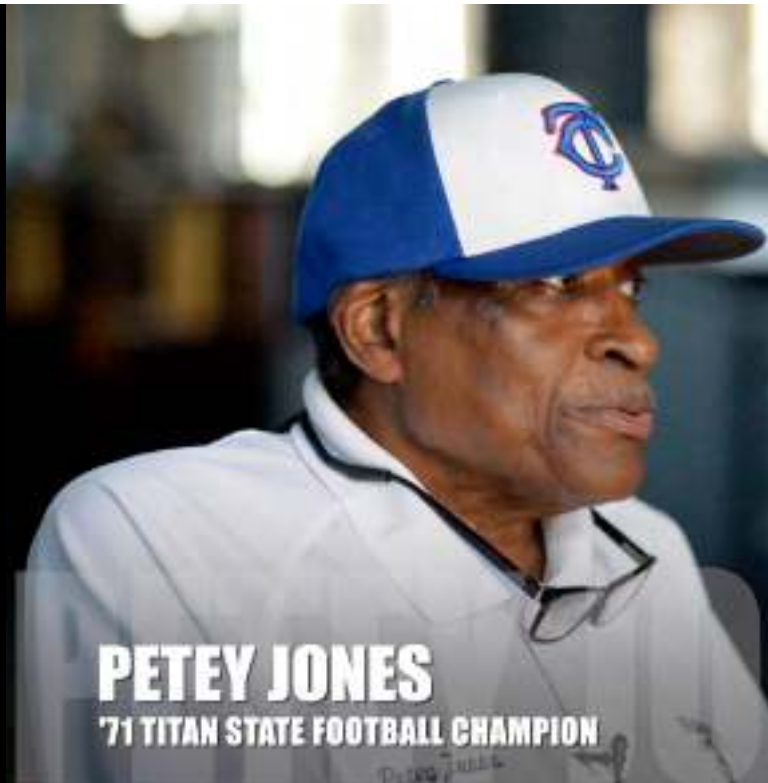
### Brown vs. Board: It Takes a Community to Make a Difference

In our final article commemorating the 65th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education and Alexandria's long journey to desegregation, we turn our attention to the community activism it took to made strides towards equity in Alexandria. Learn about the Secret Seven, a group of men resolved to end the systemic racism in Alexandria in the 1960s.

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Equity Discussion Strategy

In articles and videos, we interviewed and highlighted the people who experienced the era of desegregation of Alexandria's schools, including well-known and beloved members of the 1971 Titans football team and two women who were among the first nine students to break the race barrier in all-white Alexandria schools in 1959.



**PETEY JONES**  
'71 TITAN STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPION

Alexandria City Public Schools ©  
January 22 · 🌐

"It made you feel proud to be a Titan — to be recognized as a team that helped bring this city together." - Petey Jones

Athletics has always been a source of pride and tension in the story of the desegregation of ACPS. In our second article marking the 65th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, learn the real story of how the T.C. Williams High School Titans football team figured into this history. Read on in ACPS Express: <http://www.acpsk12.org/news/?p=11969>

TC Williams High School Alumni Association



👍👍 Zed Emily, Tony Case and 110 others · 28 Comments · 34 Shares

Alexandria City Public Schools ©  
Published by Delaina McDaniel at Alexandria Schools, LLC · February 7 at 7:09 PM · 🌐

On a damp grey morning at 8:15 a.m. on February 10, 1959 — exactly 60 years ago this week — two African-American school children walked across a line of 58 police officers to become the first black students at an all-white elementary school in Alexandria. On the other side of town, three other African-American children walked into the all-white William Ramsay School. Their actions were the start of a long, slow process to desegregate ACPS — a process that took another 14 years to complete. Hear from two of these former students about their experiences that day. <http://www.acpsk12.org/news/?p=12150>

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ACPSK12.ORG  
**Brown v. Board: 60 Years On – The Action that Took 14 Years to Complete - ACPS Express**

👍👍 116 · 5 Comments · 62 Shares



**“My overwhelming memory from that time is of isolation, being marginalized and not being fully welcomed or accepted.”** — Sandra Turner



**“My father being from Chicago had never lived in a segregated environment like Alexandria. For him, it was quite an affront.”** — Kathryn Turner

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Equity Discussion Strategy

Articles and videos about Alexandria's history of desegregation were promoted on social media and in our weekly district-wide email newsletter. Upon the death in January of one of the original 1971 Titans and a key character in the Disney movie, we wrote an article promoting his legacy of unity, furthering the discussion about race and equity.



**Alexandria City Public Schools**  
Published by Delaina McCormack AlexandriaSchools (7) · February 21 at 6:45 PM · 🌐

"What is going on in this city and why does my father have to be the one to go out and do something about it?"

Meet the children of The Secret Seven, a group of men who put their lives on the line to fight for equality and desegregation in Alexandria in the 1950s and 60s. To commemorate #BlackHistoryMonth and the 65th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, we met with them to hear about what they remember from that time, the dangers their fathers faced, and the lessons for current and future generations.

Departmental Progressive Club Inc Alexandria Branch of the N.A.A.C.P.

**Alexandria City Public Schools** @ACPSK12 · Jan 11  
Dearest Remember-the-Titans, how much do you know about the desegregation of Alexandria's schools? To mark the 65th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, we're taking a closer look at the individuals & key figures who got us to where we are today. [Click to view](#)



**Alexandria City Public Schools** @ACPSK12 · Feb 22  
Ferdinand T. Day · Lawrence C. Day · Melvin Miller · Edward Emerson · Nelson Greene, Sr. · Marion Johnson · James Anderson · These are [The Secret Seven](#), men who used their lives fighting for integration in Alexandria. More info [@TheSecretSeven](#) #BlackHistoryMonth



**Alexandria City Public Schools** ·  
Published by Delaina McCormack AlexandriaSchools (7) · January 26 · 🌐

This week we remember one of our Titans, Julius Campbell. Read on about his legacy of unity, and share with us your memories of him. [#RememberTheTitans](#) [#TitanPride](#)

TC Williams High School Alumni Association

[ACPSK12.ORG](#)  
**Key Member of '71 Titans Leaves Legacy of Unity - ACPS Express**

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Equity Discussion Strategy

We worked with a local newspaper to publish the history of school desegregation in Alexandria. The superintendent's monthly articles in the local newspapers and a large community event all focused on a vision of equity.

### 60 Years Ago Nine Students Crossed a Line

**A**lexandria, Va., is celebrating the 60th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The case, which was decided in 1954, ended the practice of racial segregation in public schools. The decision was a landmark in the history of the United States, and it paved the way for the desegregation of public schools across the country.



THE EVANSVILLE COURIER  
President Signs Civil Rights Bill  
All Americans Urged To Help  
Court: Date Not Set  
McCarty-Army Hearings Future  
Thrown In Doubt  
STATE JOURNAL  
SCHOOL SEGREGATION BAN  
BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION - 65 YEARS AND COUNTING  
WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ALEXANDRIA TODAY?



### BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION - 65 YEARS AND COUNTING

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ALEXANDRIA TODAY?



Alexandria superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings lays out his "no-top" vision at E.C. Williams High School last Wednesday, Feb. 6.

### 'Raise the Bar for All Kids'

Public schools chief to boost rigor, equity.

### Equity is the Key to High-Performing Schools

**E**quity is the key to high-performing schools. Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings emphasizes that all students should have access to the same quality of education, regardless of their background. He calls for a "no-top" vision, where every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential.



"...we have joined with the Communications Department of the Alexandria City Public Schools to tell the full story of how integrating our schools have allowed them to serve all our city's youth and to reach their full potential." — publisher of The Zebra Press, Alexandria

### Filling in the Blanks with Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Ed.D.

#### The future of the high school should be more than a fleeting holiday wish

The future of our high schools is not a fleeting holiday wish. It is a commitment to providing every student with the resources and support they need to succeed. Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings is committed to creating a high-quality education for all students.

### Filling in the Blanks with Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Ed.D.

#### Implementing equitable education for all

Implementing equitable education for all is a goal that requires a commitment to equity and excellence. Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings is committed to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

# EVALUATION

## Programmatic Support

The newly sworn-in school board voted unanimously in favor of the superintendent's recommended Connected High School Network strategy. Neighboring school divisions began to work with ACPS to explore the possibility of expanding the Connected High School Network across the region.



**72%** positive change in sentiment of media coverage of The High School Project



### ACPS Announces Formal Exploration of Partnership with NOVA to Launch Early College Program

ACPS announced formal plans to take steps to partner with Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) on an Early College High School program as part of the new Connected High School Network to be set up through The High School Project. Early College will allow students the opportunity to graduate with an associate degree from NOVA at the same time as they graduate from T.C. Williams.



### Alexandria City Public Schools Proud Partner in Historic Amazon Deal

ACPS is proud to be part of a historic partnership with Virginia Tech, as part of the deal to bring Amazon's new headquarters to Northern Virginia. The announcement includes news of a partnership with Virginia Tech to develop an Innovation Campus in the Alexandria section of Potomac Yard to fill demand for high-tech talent, and coincides with the recent launch by ACPS of The High School Project: Inspiring a Future for Alexandria.



# EVALUATION

## Equity Discussion

The campaign resulted in heightened conversation around equity across the city that acted as a platform from which to launch discussions around the delivery of high school programming. For the first time ever, the city manager in his budget presentation publicly talked about equity and the need to increase school funding to support equity in schools.



# REINVENTING THE TITANS

“We want to make the city equitable, smarter and greener.”

— Alexandria city manager

9,271  
ENGAGEMENTS  
+  
115,128  
IMPRESSIONS

ON SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS HIGHLIGHTING  
RACE AND EQUITY



74%

increase in media  
coverage of equity  
issues over the  
period from July 2018  
to February 2019