

When students are given a platform to share their thoughts, they help shape a more inclusive and responsive educational environment. In August 2024, Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) launched the Academies at Alexandria City, an innovative learning model featuring small, theme-based learning communities. The introduction of this curriculum model, paired with the opening of Alexandria City High Schools (ACHS) newly renovated Minnie Howard campus, presented an exciting opportunity to highlight student voices and perspectives allowing them to directly influence their learning experience. To elevate student input, ACPS collaborated across departments to produce a multi-part video series that captured student insights about the Academies model, the new school building and their academic experiences. This initiative, driven by a partnership between ACHS students and staff and the Department of School and Community Relations, fostered collaboration, built trust and reinforced a culture where student voices are valued and amplified. In anticipation of the August 2024 launch, a comprehensive curriculum that met students' diverse needs and interests was sought. In January 2024, during the academic advising period, a video series that would engage students and generate excitement about the new curriculum model and high school facilities was planned. The videos explored: Course offerings and academic pathways within the Academies. Student perspectives on the transition to the new curriculum model. A first look at the newly renovated Minnie Howard campus. The energy and anticipation surrounding the upcoming school year. By centering student voices in these discussions, ACPS aimed to make the transition engaging and transparent for the broader school community. The video series provided the students a platform to share their perspectives on the new academic model and campus, fostering a sense of ownership and excitement. The Office of Community Partnerships and Engagement led the initiative, planning for a monthly video release from April to June. ACPS partnered with ACHS' Broadcasting Club involving students directly in filming and production to ensure authentic representation of their experiences. Key collaboration efforts included: Content Development The Department of Teaching, Learning and Leadership provided guidance on curriculum-related content to ensure accuracy in student interviews. Facilities and Operations Support The team granted access to architectural renderings and facilitated a

recorded walk-through of the new campus. Innovative Student Engagement The ACPS Grants team organized a virtual tour using augmented and virtual reality headsets, offering students an immersive experience of the new campus. Student & Staff Involvement School counselors, principals and teachers helped identify students for interviews, while PreK-8, middle, and high school staff coordinated filming sessions. Throughout the process, students played an integral role in content creation, from sharing their insights on-camera to assisting with video editing ensuring a student-centered approach to storytelling. The completed videos were uploaded to a dedicated ACPS YouTube playlist, shared via the ACPS Express newsletter, promoted across social media platforms and featured on the Academies at Alexandria City student engagement webpage. Since publication, the video series has received: 600+ views on YouTube 4.7K Facebook views