

Accomplishments and Events  
Alexandria City Public Schools

*Members of the T. C. Williams High School 1998 Virginia State Science Bowl championship team were recognized at the General Assembly by Delegate Marian Van Landingham. Members of the team from left, standing next to Delegate Van Landingham, are Abigail Shafroth, Seye Ojumu, Rebecca Marland, Chris Sharp and Maria Catilo. Also present are Delegate Brian Moran, State Senator Patricia Ticer and the team's coach Dr. Manu Patel.*

*(Editor's note: Information in this section was provided by the [Alexandria City Public Schools](#).)*

## Primary Initiative

In September 1996, a bold new instructional undertaking, the Primary Initiative, was launched by the first elected Alexandria School Board and the superintendent to ensure that after three years of primary instruction all students would be at or above grade level in reading and mathematics. To meet this goal, this initiative provides: small class sizes for optimal teacher contact; constant monitoring of student progress; effective interpretation and use of student test data in daily instruction; new strategies to improve reading and mathematics instruction; supplementary classroom materials; mentoring of classroom teachers; increased communication between parent and teacher; and widespread deployment of community persons as mentors and reading partners.

## Technology

[Alexandria City Public Schools](#) (ACPS) continued implementing the long range plan for technology during the summer of 1998 by wiring the last four of 16 schools for the new technologies. Each classroom will be equipped with a desktop and laptop computer, a printer, a television and appropriate furniture and software. As of September 1, 1998 all ACPS classrooms and school library media centers have Internet access. During the same period, all school system buildings and schools were connected to the City's Institutional Network.

Closed circuit video systems are being completed in all 16 schools. A school system cable channel is to be activated with the station located at T. C. Williams. This channel provides a communication mode between the school system and the Alexandria Community. All 16 schools are to receive some upgrades and replacements for current instructional technology. Additionally, evaluation of the use and effect of technology in the classroom is scheduled.

## **Standardized Tests**

ACPS administers three standardized tests to students. The focus of each is the mastery of specific skills. In the fall, students in grades 4, 6, and 9 are given the Stanford 9 Achievement Test. Achievement test results can be used to compare Alexandria to the nation. In the spring, students in grades 3, 5 and 8 take the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests which they must pass as a State requirement for graduation. Also in the spring, ACPS tests students in grades 1, 2, 4 and 7 on the ACPS curriculum. These tests are called CRTs (criterion-referenced tests). For all tests, parents will receive an individual report on student mastery.

## **Middle School Blueprint for Excellence**

This action plan will result in middle schools that incorporate research, best practices, and community expectations for middle school excellence leading to a more rigorous academic standard and ultimately higher student achievement. Francis C. Hammond and George Washington Middle Schools are developing school improvement plans as part of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation process.

School reform is an inclusive, labor intensive endeavor that requires support from staff, the parent community and the School Board. By working together, students in Alexandria middle schools will receive a world class education. The Middle School Blueprint for Excellence is available on the ACPS web site at <http://www.acps.k12.va.us>.

## **New West End Elementary School**

In September 2000, the school system will open a new elementary school in the Cameron Station Development. The new school will serve 600 students in grades K-5. The two-story school will be adjacent to the West End Park at Cameron Station and will have access to the parks, playgrounds and ball fields. Construction is scheduled to begin in April 1999.

## **Community Resources**

During the 1997-98 school year, business and community partnerships increased from 49 to 81. The school volunteer corps, now over 2,300, saw similar increases. The focal point of activity this past year has been the Primary Initiative. This program is strongly supported by volunteer reading tutors from the City, Alexandria's faith community, NAACP, and others.