

**School Board Organizational Meeting**  
**July 1, 2015**  
**Dr. Violand-Sánchez Statement**

Thank you Ms. Van Doren for your nomination, and I know we are going to continue to work very closely together. Thank you colleagues for your vote. I look forward to working with you as a team this school year. I believe in shared leadership.

I am especially grateful to you, Mr. Lander, for your leadership I appreciate your focus on student achievement. One of the exciting things for our Board is that we work together as a team with the Superintendent in addressing our Strategic Plan goals. I want to thank the Executive Leadership Team, Dr. Murphy, our teachers and parents.

I am also grateful to the County Board for your support for the Budget Principles and your continued commitment to education. I want to say a special thank you to my mentor, Mr. Tejada. I will miss you. You are always a friend and we will always be together in "la lucha".

The complex changes that Arlington Public Schools must go through in the next few years requires that the School Board, the County Board, the community, and school staff continue to work together.

It is critically important that we maintain adequate learning space for our growing student population. This must be done through a cost-effective and sensible plan, developed in strong collaboration with the community and the Arlington County Board. We must maximize the use of all school and county facilities to benefit our students, our families, and the larger community.

I do believe in the power of education. Yes, I am a proud immigrant from Bolivia. I came to this country as a teenager without my family, but it's interesting that now my mother, a 96-year old, lives with me at home. Really, it was school became my lifeline as a teenager. I am proud that I ended up working in Arlington Public Schools and raised as a single mom, two adult children who share my love of learning and teaching. I am proud to introduce to you two, English as a Second Language, bilingual teachers - my son, James Hainer Violand and my daughter, Julia Hainer Violand, and my new son-in-law, Henry Mesias. It is a joy, as a mother, to share our love for education.

I believe in the Arlington Public Schools' mission to instill a love of learning in our students. We need to prepare our students to be responsible and productive global citizens.

Arlington is already a global community with students who come from 96 different countries, who speak 81 different languages. Languages need to be celebrated and viewed as an asset. Bilingualism is a priority under my leadership. Bilingualism is a social, educational, and economic asset that opens students to the world. So, in Arlington Public Schools, over the past years, we have invested in teaching all our students a world language since elementary school. It is our goal that all students graduate from high school proficient in more than one language.

Secondly, under my leadership, we must retain and hire outstanding educators. Our teachers must be adequately supported and compensated to help our students succeed. Further, I want to include more teacher perspectives in the decision-making process, especially when we continue to talk about eliminating the achievement gap. To do so, we must be more culturally responsive as a

school system. Our families and community organizations must be welcomed as partners in our schools to support our students' success.

Therefore, we must prioritize the 5<sup>th</sup> Goal of the Strategic Plan, which is "meeting the needs of the Whole Child." How will we do this? By nurturing our students' intellectual, personal, social, physical and emotional development with services and strategies that support our students, with collaboration with our County Board.

Students need an environment that is safe, healthy, engaging, and responsive to their needs and abilities. We must enhance physical, mental health and wellness services in our schools. Our families, educators and Arlington County must partner together to provide the solid support network essential for student success, and for families and educators as well.

So I ask, after 36 years in Arlington:

What if the ultimate goal in education is, at its heart, a call to care for students and teachers?

What if we put a greater emphasis on compassion and care for learners rather than the current overemphasis on testing scores?

Or as President Obama stated in his eulogy to Reverend Pickney in South Carolina: "We must recognize our common humanity, by treating every child as important, regardless of the color of their skin ... or the station into which they were born, and to do what's necessary to make opportunity real for every child in America".

What a greater place Arlington Public Schools would be.