



The Anthology

Alexandria City Public Schools 2021-2022

The Anthology

Alexandria City Public Schools 2021-2022

“The Anthology” is a compilation of extraordinary poems submitted by ACPS students between 3rd and 12th grade. The ACPS Poetry Contest originated over 14 years ago and continues as an annual tradition and means to celebrate and honor our student writers. We are delighted that this is the fifth year the contest has extended beyond elementary to include our secondary schools.

Designated teachers, serving as poetry liaisons at each school, coordinated school-level poetry contests and judging for grades 3-12. Each school judging committee selected one best of grade level poem as well as one overall best-of-school poem.

Poetry liaisons forwarded their school’s winning poems to the division contest and a few additional division-level designations were identified, including division best-of-grade level winners, a creativity award (a special award given by our community judging panel), as well as elementary and secondary student ACPS Poet Laureates. The ACPS Poet Laureate award is selected from the submissions of school overall winners.

Winners from each of the above categories are featured in this 2021-2022 edition of “The Anthology.” The elementary version of “The Anthology” also becomes a core text that students in grades 3-5 will study in the poetry unit of the ACPS writing curriculum.

A tremendous thank you to the Poetry Liaisons for their dedication and hard work with which this contest, anthology, and ceremony would not be possible. Thank you to the ACHS Labyrinth staff and Mr. Taki Sidley, Labyrinth advisor, for creating such a wonderful publication for all ACPS staff, students, and families to enjoy. Additionally, thank you to all the student participants. Enjoy!

Kimberly Schell
ACPS K-12 Literacy Coordinator and Secondary Literacy Specialist

Carolyn Wooster
Elementary Literacy Specialist

Table of Contents

Elementary School Winners

Charles Barrett

Grade 3	9
Grade 4	10
Grade 5	11
Overall	12

Cora Kelly

Grade 3	13
Grade 4	14
Grade 5	15
Overall	16

Douglas MacArthur

Grade 4	17
Grade 4	18
Grade 5	19
Overall	20

Ferdinand T. Day

Grade 3	21
Grade 4	22
Grade 5	23
Overall	24

George Mason

Grade 3	25
Grade 4	26
Grade 5	27
Overall	28

James K. Polk

Grade 3	29
Grade 4	30
Grade 5	31
Overall	32

John Adams

Grade 3	33
Grade 4	34
Grade 5	35
Overall	36

Lyles-Crouch

Grade 3	37
Grade 4	38
Grade 5	39
Overall	40

Mount Vernon

Grade 3	41
Grade 4	42
Grade 5	43
Overall	44

Naomi L. Brooks

Grade 3	45
Grade 4	46
Grade 5	47
Overall	48

Patrick Henry

Grade 3	49
Grade 4	50
Grade 5	51
Overall	52

Samuel Tucker

Grade 3	53
Grade 4	54
Grade 5	55
Overall	56

William Ramsay

Grade 3	57
Grade 4	58
Grade 5	59
Overall	60

Secondary Winners

Patrick Henry	
Grade 6	64
Grade 7	65
Grade 8	66
Overall	67
Francis C. Hammond	
Grade 6	68
Grade 7	69
Grade 8	70
Overall	71
George Washington	
Grade 6	72
Grade 7	73
Grade 8	74
Overall	75
Chance For Change	
Grade 9	76
Grade 11	77
Grade 12	78
Alexandria City High School	
Grade 9	79
Grade 10	80
Grade 11	81
Grade 12	82
Overall	83

Special Awards

Elementary Poet Laureate	86
Creativity Award Elementary	86
Secondary Poet Laureate	87
Creativity Award Secondary	87
Acknowledgements	88-89

"I can shake off
everything as I write; my
sorrows disappear, my
courage is reborn."

-Anne Frank

"I write to discover what
I know."

-Flannery O'Connor

GRADE 3 WINNER

“Family”

My sister is a little miss perfect.
My step dad is a big bear and he loves pancakes!
Hehehe!
My mom is a hard working :) queen
and I'm a.....fish!
I take everything in, slowly and calmly.
Altogether,
We sure are one.....

CRAZY FAMILY!

GRADE 4 WINNER

“Future”

(Acrostic Poem)

Flexible
Undecided
Time
Unexplainable
Ready for anything
Every decision makes a difference

**Claudia Reading
Ms Ienzi**

GRADE 5 WINNER

“Waterfall”

Rivers that flow off the cliffs,
To create a beautiful mist,
You shimmer, you shine,
You’re a blue so divine,
That’s the color of the sky.

When sun hits your blue,
A rainbow blooms,
Your cliffs so sharp,
But your heart ,
So blue and big and bright.

You’re powerful and perfect,
But as we both grow,

Our life will go.

OVERALL SCHOOL WINNER

“Out of My Window”

I am amazed of what I see
The things that are before me
I see the clouds and the sky
I see balloons and airplanes fly
And I will do what I need to do
To be one of the things out of my window.

My window is amazing
So I am left there gazing
Instead of being overpowered
I feel superpowered
When I started the window was a bore
Then I felt no floor

It is amazing to what it will be
When I am out sharing my glee
I shall now go out and play
On this nice summer day
I embrace the wind and feel the sun
Time to go and have some fun

I see the trees and grass
In the window I only saw glass
The view is so cool
The sight makes me drool
I run around like a gerbil
It is so cool that what I see isn't verbal

Let your imagination flow
Like the wind, let it blow
I can imagine I'm a hero
Leaving the villain with a zero
You can be anything
Those are the things out of my window

Kellen Pulliam
Ms. Landis

GRADE 3 WINNER**“The Meal”**

This is a meal
so I'm going to make you a deal
If you clean my room I will give you the meal
But if you don't I will peal
You a banana but I'm being real
Serious, so if you are real
You can get your meal
But if you are going to be lazy
I'm going to make you crazy
So you can finish the deal
So you can get your meal
So if you don't I will be on a road
With a goat and a boat,
The fox in the box with the ox
But the fox and the ox are toxic
So I put locks on it
So they are stuck in a box
So please clean
My room so you can finally finish your deal
And meal

GRADE 4 WINNER

“The Stories Old”

The stories old,
Tell tales of gold,
In mountains bold,

With dungeons deep,
Where pris’ners weep,
And lichens creep

Through forests grim,
And moonlight dim,
But monsters swim
in the shadows.

**Callen X. Ohlandt
Ms. Ridley**

GRADE 5 WINNER

“Haiku”

Flowers are so nice
But I cannot make them grow
Unfortunately

Leila Madhani
Mr. Ingram

OVERALL WINNER

“The Darkness”

Live
Laugh
Love
Before The Darkness comes
Fly
Glide
Ride
Cry
Before The Darkness comes
Dream
Inspire
Before The Darkness comes
Dance
Have fun
Make puns
Before The Darkness comes
Protect
Affect
Elect
Before The Darkness comes
Inspire a new generation
Save people
Save animals
Save the planet
But leave room for others to make their mark
You won't be perfect
You won't be the best
There'll always be something you didn't do
After you, there'll be other who finish what you left off
No legend lasts forever
Even though you won't be there to see it
But in the end, where all beings reach their peak, it all fades away to nothingness
Then it starts again, getting better and better
That is why The Darkness comes

Jacob Copeland
Ms. Baker

GRADE 3 WINNER

“Spring oh Spring”

Flowers bloom
Spring oh spring
The sun shines bright
Spring oh spring
We scream with delight!

Najwa Elbayed
Ms. Lansing

GRADE 4 WINNER

“Love, Life, Sadness, Happiness”

If life was never penetrated by challenges
There would be no
Love,
Sadness,
Happiness,
If no one stood up for other people
There would be no splendor for human love,
So thank you even for the times that try our souls.

**Ben Platt
Ms. Rougier**

GRADE 5 WINNER

“Lines ”

We are like lines
if we were all straight we would all be the same.
if one did a crime all would be to blame.
if we're all the same it would be lame.
but we all have twists and turns
snakes and lakes
cakes and brakes.
all of our lines are different with curves and swerves
and none of us are straight.

OVERALL WINNER

“Thank You For My Life”

Thank you for my life with skies
and starts and clouds dancing in the sky.
Thank you for flowers in fields,
and hobbies like sports
with fun and always waking up to the sun.
Thank you for my life
with seas of fish and creatures
to be discovered in the deep
that reached to the bottom of mysteries
the ocean reflects the blue in skies,
Thank you for forest filled with animals
with ways to connect with the trees that speak
but no one listens to their leafs
whistle with pride due to the wind
that flies like birds from
the nest going to the fly through their years of life,
thank you for mountains
to climb like ladders to be taller than the clouds
that give me the water to run through
like running into my dreams. Thank you for my life.

Camila O'Brien-Gonzalez

GRADE 3 WINNER

“H2O”

Water, water the coolness of water,
splashing...
sploshing...
splishing...

all around my window, over and over again. Water is rain, snow, sleet and hail. It comes at all of the seasons. Water is amazing. You make me relaxed, calm and sad. We would like you to come more often. Thank you for coming. You are one of the best things in the world. You're here to say hello and goodbye.

GRADE 4 WINNER

“The Boat of Life”

You ride the boat of life.
It’s a very bumpy ride.
There are many obstacles
for the boat of life.
The boat of life has
troubles, troubles between
friends, but the most
trouble for the boat
of life is war. But
the boat of life
sometimes has calm
waters. The boat of
life carries every living
thing, but it has
never sunk on us.
It is the one and
only boat of life.

Nathan Kelete
Ms. Katie Kaplewicz

GRADE 5 WINNER

“Beauty ”

I see.....online a blue eyed blonde with a perfect body
Wishing that was me.
Crying that was me.....begging that was me.

Then someone came and said, “don’t worry, you are worth more than you see.”

But I still do not see it.
I was tired of me.

Then, more people say, “you are worth it.”
Now I realize my own beauty,
My own beauty.

OVERALL WINNER

“Why so quiet?”

Why so quiet?
The sound of the quiet.
So somber.
So shallow.
When the night falls you find yourself ALONE.
But for the room.
For it shall deserve YOU.
Your voice matters. YOU MATTER.
JUST TALK.
You deserve some fun!
Give your room some memories.
Suddenly.. I SCREAM.
I can't handle it.
The voices in my head..
They CONTROL me.
Not letting me do anything.
Just stop.
STOP.
STOP!
STOP!
Suddenly.. I faint.
Seeing a blank canvas as dark as the midnight sky.
And I hear NOTHING.
Shall I listen?
YES YES YES NO NO NO!
Do I talk too much?
I shall stay shut.
I shall overcome the FEAR.
THE FEAR OF...

I finally say..”hello?”
A sinister voice laughs.
I grab a blanket and cover myself as fast as lightning.
I WANT TO HIDE.
I NEED TO HIDE.
Right...?

Barkot Takele
Ms. Katie Kaplewicz

GRADE 3 WINNER

“HAPPY CAT”

Orange cat cuddled up on couch.
House is silent, not a whisper of sound.
Soft wind blowing, trees dance and sway.
Bird flutters through the window.

Blue as the sky.

Feline pounces, misses, hitting the living room wall.

Feathered friend flies to freedom.

Now is gone.

GRADE 4 WINNER

“Nature”

Whistling winds and clouds to count
Sometimes causes problems like rain or a drought
You see all the oceans and blue crystal seas

It's like fulfilling a destiny
When you feel the warmth of the sun
You feel sleepy and feel like your done
You see a lot animals like monkeys and lions
You think they're beautiful and think they're like diamonds
You see a lot of coral but also see trash
You want to get rid of it in dash
Now you feel worried, really worried
You need to do something and you need to hurry
You have a feeling, one to do now
One to do before the sun goes down
Saving mother nature from pollution
You can do it, find a solution.

**Tihitina Eskinder
Mrs.Stuart**

GRADE 5 WINNER

“Getting Older”

What will it feel like if I grow up,
It probably is going to be like I took a step up,

How exciting that will be,
Going alone to the beautiful sea,
Shopping by yourself,
Getting a cute bookshelf
I want to be a teacher, musician,
Scientist, dancer, doctor, or singer,
I want to be everything in this world,

Going on trips,
Oops it's drip drop drip,
Ohh Ohh I forgot I have to buy some
Rice while it's on sale,
MOM!!! You interrupted my dream,
Come back from your dreamy world,

To the real world,
Wait for your age to come

OVERALL WINNER

“Fairness”

It doesn't matter if you're black or white,
Or transgender,
Or LGBTQ+.
You just have to be kind
And do what you want to do.
Sometimes you have to stop and realize
That people who are
Black, transgender, and LGBTQ+
Have changed our world.
And have changed people
Just like you.
I think no one should
Be bullied for the decisions they make,
Or something they're born with
Everyone should have equality for all.

**Norah Milner
Ms. Pollard**

GRADE 3 WINNER

“My Sister is Moving Away”

My sister is moving away
I'm sad
I'm gloomy
I really must say
It hurts me to see her go
I try to hide it
I try to let it go
She will miss me
I will miss her
I'm crying inside
My sister is moving away

Kylie Moore
Mrs. Yung Fang Smith

GRADE 4 WINNER

“Window”

Watching birds fly by
Independent as a group of cats cross the lawn
Nuts falling on the ground
Wondering if the squirrel will come and pick them up
Open window wide
Wait for breeze to go by

**Mary Jane Bryant
Ms. Amanda Kloss**

GRADE 5 WINNER

“Teddy Bear”

Old and dirty as he is
He was loved
And cared for
By children of all ages
Eyes and stitches
Falling off

Alison Maldonado
Ms. Diana Bailey

OVERALL WINNER

“Tree”

Memories revolve
Around this tall
Rough
Brown
Gray
Living statue of
Sweet smelling oak
It's arms reach up
Into the sky
As if
It wants
To catch all of
The birds
And be a home
To thousands
And thousands
Of small animals
From ants
To hawks
And to shade
All of the
Kids that run
Along
The sand-like ground
Beneath this moment
Of sure nature

**Dorothy Thompson
Ms. Cynthia Thornton**

GRADE 3 WINNER

“Year of the Tiger”

The wind blows in my hair,
It is a cold Dark Night.
I can smell Silks and spices,
I can hear singers singing.
Chopsticks are scattered around the floor
I can taste the delicious rice,
I can feel the smooth table.

It is the Lunar New Year!

GRADE 4 WINNER

“Colors Everywhere”

A gorgeous blue sky or some yummy red apple pie
Yellow honey bees and green pine trees
Purple flowers and white colored towers
Pink fairy lights and golden colored kites
Light brown doors and orange rewards
Colors are around you, colors surround you.

**Grace Sola
Ms. Norman**

GRADE 5 WINNER

“Chains”

I'm all up in chains like a slave
I wish for my freedom but never get it.
I feel like I am in Jail
For something I did not commit.
I feel like a car about to crash
Like a cat on its last life
I am barely hanging but then at last I fall.

OVERALL WINNER

“Reaching for the Stars”

Universe.

The word rattled through my ear, and I began to ask questions.

Am I a part of the universe?

Why am I here?

How did I get here?

Am I in existence?

Am I an electronic simulation?

An image projected on the side of a black hole?

“Who am I!?” I screamed to the seemingly endless stars.

At that moment, I left my body.

I slipped out of my body, lighter than air itself.

I drift among the stars. I touch their stardust.

I swim across the rings of many planets.

I see early life on earth like planets, the ocean cradling them like a baby.

I see bustling alien metropolises, living things that have eradicated war and strife.

I opened a door full of possibility as I saw flying cars zoom beneath me.

Why couldn't we live like them? To eradicate all sources of unhappiness?

“Man is the source of unhappiness,” I heard behind me.

I turned to see a miniature sun floating behind me.

It glowed, not ordinary matter, but the celestial sky itself, all forced into a single, glowing ball.

“He attacks others, always hungering for more power, more currency, more control over the universe. He is never grateful for what he had.”

I opened my eyes to see man rushing across the battlefield in giant war machines that destroyed cities.

“This is Man of the future,” the voice said.

“Or maybe,” The star showed another image, one of people resting peacefully in small straw huts.

They seemed happy with what they had.

“Or maybe, maybe this will be the Man of the future.” The light held out another, smaller, ball of light.

“Follow the light.” it said, and then faded into nothing, leaving me and the smaller light alone.

I reached out to touch it, but an invisible wall stopped me.

I fall back, gravity pulling me back to earth, back home.

The alien city whizzes away, planets jumping past me, and I re-enter my body.

“Was it a dream?” But I know it wasn't. I squeeze my fists, grit my teeth, pull in my lungs. I compact myself into a ball. I squeeze and squeeze until.. POP! My soul explodes and zooms like a rocket, and reaches the light.

I break that invisible barrier with my hope that humanity can be changed. I reach the

light. It feels soft and warm, but not too hot, like the universe itself.

“I AM FREE!” I screamed.

I expand my arms, but I don't have any anymore.

No...

I am an idea, the free, moral, uplifting soul!

I am a part of the universe!

“But...”

I look at Earth and see horrible things I didn't see before.

People dying, war and strife.

I will help. I promise.

I rush to earth to help.

Hayden Wixom

Mr. Perez/Ms. Makin

GRADE 3 WINNER

“Breathe In To Breathe Out”

Breathe in peace, breathe out discord
Breathe in life, breathe out death
Breathe in happiness, breathe out sadness
Breathe in friendliness, breathe out unkindness
Breathe in trust, breathe out distrust
Breathe in to breathe out.

Alexander Sequeira-Legeido
Mrs. Harris

GRADE 4 WINNER

“My Poochie”

In loving memory of Pretzel, the guinea pig.

He squeaks. No, he squeaked in
His cage that creaks. No, it creaked.
He is my Poochie.

He chews. No, he chewed on
A crunch, crunchy carrot,
He is my poochie.

He purrs. No, he purred when
I pet, petted him on his tiny head,
He is my Poochie.

He would squeak all day,
Then the squeaking stopped.

He was my Poochie.

Riley Kiss

Ms. Zybrick, Mrs. Yonkers

GRADE 5 WINNER**“Sincerely”**

I'm Sorry I ate your favorite book
 But your door was open I had to look
 The Sunshine shining to your Purple bookshelf
 It was a decision I made myself

I started reading through them all
 And still you weren't home from the mall
 I found your favorite, “The Adventures of Goats”
 Oh how they made those Wooden Boats

It thrilled me and gave me such delight
 It made me lose my sight!
 The clock striking six o' clock
 When I was running with your book, I tripped on a rock

I got up and ran to my home
 And told the story to my gnome
 His name was Sir Garden Rocktide flat
 But he somehow turned into a rat
 I was surprised but my stomach growled
 I knew I wasn't really allowed
 But I sprinkled the book with salt and pepper
 I just ate it and said “whatever”

Right that moment you stormed in
 Then I asked, “Where have you been?”
 You screamed at me, ‘WHERE IS MY BOOK?’
 From my head to my toes I shook

Sincerely, I'm very sorry
 I would buy a new, but all my money was stolen by Perry McCorry
 Go ask her not me
 Or stay and try my brand new tea!

Yoonji Oh
Ms. Zichelli, Mrs. Corbi

OVERALL WINNER

“The Time We Take”

As I look up at the misty, blue sky and think about...

The [Memories],

The Fights,

The Victory that made this country POWERFUL,

ACCELERATE into Form.

I, Miles Mosley, can say that I've been to the MountainTop and felt what it is like to be REJECTED,

DENIED, Falling...from the MountainTop...

But I got back up and thought about me, my family, my hopes and dreams and did my DrEaM

It all happened by not The Time I Take..., But The Time We Take.

Miles Mosley

Mrs. Corbi/Ms. Zichelli

GRADE 3 WINNER

“Voices”

A song which changes human vision,
that moves around and can not be ignored.

Stands as a wall against hate.

Voices make a change.

It is a peaceful way to fight.

People will try to quiet your voice.

It will fight back

Peacefully.

Voices make change.

GRADE 4 WINNER

“I am From”

I am from baby pictures on the wooden shelf
I am from warm *aroz con leche* on the silver pan
I am from the big church around the corner, near the skinny lemon tree leaves as green as could be.
I am from long prayers near my bed
I am from great siblings and cousins
I am from early risers and picky eaters
I am from the *tamales de elote con crema*
I am from respecting others and never giving up
I am from El Salvador and Catholic.

**Emerson J. Campos Aleman
Mrs. Portfield**

GRADE 5 WINNER**“If History Were A Color ”**

If history were a color,
It'd be gold like the North Star,
And chocolate brown for those who went under the night sky.
It would be sunset colors for the flames.
Blue for all those cries.
It would be red, white, and blue,
For the voting boxes that women weren't allowed to touch.
It would be red like the mama's lips,
That kissed their kids when they were sold.
It'd be white for the chalk that the human computers used.
It would be red for the courage that Ruby Bridges had.
But it was YELLOW for the heroes that stopped inequality.
It would be yellow for the freedom they fought for.
And yellow for the bravery they fought with.
And yellow for the hope that got us here.

Mariana Carpio
Mrs. Peace

OVERALL WINNER

“For The Girl Who Needs It More Than Me”

I am proud of my hair.
I keep it long, I will never cut it off.
My hair is me
Whether I wear it in a bun
Under a hat
Or cascading down my back.

My mother is a doctor.
One day, when she comes home from the hospital,
She is sad. Quiet.
She shows me a picture of a single, long hair.
This, she tells me, is the last strand of hair from a girl's head.
I don't understand. Why are you showing me that? I ask.
She shakes her head. This girl didn't want to lose her hair. But
she has cancer.

The medicine causes her hair to fall out.
I am silent. I curl my long hair around my finger.
My mother says, You are very lucky.
I nod, because I know it's true.
Later, I stand before the bathroom mirror.
My hair looks glossy and beautiful in the fluorescent light.
I have so much of it.
But that girl has none.
I hold my hair up so that
It is shoulder length.
My back feels empty without my hair to warm it.
My neck feels cold, unprotected.
A shiver runs down my spine.
I release my hair.
My shoulders relax. I take a deep breath.
In 1, 2, 3... Out 1, 2, 3.
My hair is everything.
But so was the girl's.

I head downstairs, silent as a mouse.
The scissors are in the kitchen cabinet.
Only a few more steps,
I pull open the drawer.
I close my hand around the cool metal of the blade.
I can't watch myself,
so I don't return to the bathroom mirror.
I close my eyes
Tight,
Tight,
Tight.

I grab a fistful of my hair.
The back of the blade touches my neck.
I bring my fingers together.
Swish, snip. I don't look.
I cut quickly, messily.
Tears rundown my face.

Before my mother sees me, it is done.
I gather the hair from the floor,
careful to make the ends even.
A rubber band to fasten it together.
Mother is sleeping on the couch.
I put the bundle of hair on the coffee table.
I leave a note.
It says:
For the girl who needs it more than me.

**Allie Cain
Mrs. Peace**

GRADE 3 WINNER

“Blue”

Blue is oceans.
Blue is whales.
Blue is sadness.
Blue is serene.

Blue tastes like cotton candy.
Blue smells like blue flowers.

Blue sounds like dolphins communicating.
Blue feels like floating above the world.

Blue looks like the sky.
Blue makes me tired.
Blue is sadness.

Phoebe Zager
Mrs. Amanda Bradley

GRADE 4 WINNER

“Swimming Pool”

If you...

Go to a swimming pool
You'll smell that strong scent of chlorine.
You'll feel the nice cold water splash at your legs.
You'll hear all the people splashing and kids laughing
and
If
You
Take
A
Lick
It's GROSS

Jane Lambert
Ms. Ree Chung/ Ms. Paige Selber

GRADE 5 WINNER

“Tribute to Spiders”

Under the darkness under the night
lays a creature that gives me a fright
This creature haunts me whenever i dream
And always makes me wake out of bed and scream .
This creature gives me the creep
Whenever I try to sleep.
My tormentor is called a spider
And whenever is see one my eyes grow wider
But I always keep in mind what spiders help
Provide .

They kill pests and insects
And help your foods grow and m
Have a better effect .
So even though i might always fear
These little creatures are always here
And I will always remember :
Spiders help the ecosystem grow better .

OVERALL WINNER

“Thoughts of a Waterbottle”

You fill me up
And drink me!
I'm heavy when I'm full!
You sip my contents
It tickles my cover
I like it
You drink me until im
Not
So
Full.

Dont chug me.
I'm not scarce
Savor my flavor!

I like this job
Very much!!!
You can put different things inside me.
Tired of water?
What about fanta?
Try dr.pepper!
Feeling like a sprite?
Even coca cola!
Nice, warm hot cocoa!
Please
Choose
me!

Ryan Wood

Ms. Ree Chung/ Ms. Paige Selber

GRADE 3 WINNER

“My Shining Friend”

Your eyes are so bright, you are the opposite of night.
You shine all day And you never go away.
And when I look at you I cry Because you are super duper bright!
You are a star,
A very big star! And I can see you wherever you are! Your friends are the clouds,
All fluffy and white And with them you shine nice and bright!
You sparkle on the grass so cool, but in winter I can't go in the pool!
You shine all day,
Under you I play So you are my best friend SUN!!!

Eliana Yohanes
Mrs. Sanford

GRADE 4 WINNER

“The Night”

The night is cold
The day is warm
When I'm sleeping
I think of the day
That I will wake
Up and have
The greatest day
And when I wake up
All I see is rain
That doesn't matter
Because I'll always
Stay the same

GRADE 5 WINNER

“Roses”

Red cups blooming from the ground
With a green line to help it stand
While looking at trees and bushes
Look at the roses red and blooming.

Faith Henderson
Ms. Thomas

OVERALL WINNER

“The Mouse”

I have a little mouse
Who lives in a house
He would come to my living room
To watch me on zoom.
He loves to play hide and seek
He cheats because he always peeks
Now I will get revenge with cheese I
love to hear him scream, “Please!”
Now I’m off to sleep in my bed
I see dancing mice in my head
Now I’m up, it’s morning
I still hear my mouse snoring.

Makai Harris
Mrs. Paschal-Gilmore

GRADE 3 WINNER

“Bright Students”

The sun is bright and students too
That’s why I love this school -it’s true.
I learn so much here every day
Even at dismissal I say, “I wanna stay!”
When I see my desk I sit along my chair
My emotion feels so happy it makes me swing my hair!
When I go to school it makes me feel joy
Like I’m playing with my favorite toy.

Tania Gutierrez
Mrs. Robert

GRADE 4 WINNER

“Why the War?”

Why pick the war?
Why pick the pain?
Why pick the one option
To fight in the rain?
Why pick the sadness?
Why the misery?
Why only die with your men as a mystery?
No one will like you-
This infamous you
The one who picks war and food that tastes like glue.
Over your family.
The ones you love.
The ones who warned you
Don't lose what you love.
You said, You said,
That you 'needed' to do it.
No,
No,
No you didn't.
Why couldn't you stop it all
Before it even happened?
It's simple
It's easy
Why, why couldn't?
You have a gun,
You have a voice.
You have a tongue,
You have a choice.
Why did you have to pick the wrong option
Because clearly,
Clearly,
You don't think often.

**Emma Lehman
Mrs. Noack**

GRADE 5 WINNER

“Door”

There was this one time I saw a door
So I asked myself how to open it—
First I used a plunger then I used—
A shoe then a tissue and then I knew
What to do I asked the door to open
By itself.

Joaquin Mendoza
Ms. Campbell

GRADE 3 WINNER

“School”

I Love the food
I like the teachers
And the P.E. bleachers
And the classroom sleepers
And the recess teachers

Fabio Bernal
Ms. Regina Van Buren

GRADE 4 WINNER

“Space Poems”

The moon
Oh moon oh moon how bright you shine
we see you glimmering in the dark
I wonder where you got your light
we tell stories in the night
we sleep under your light
we all talk about your great glory at sight.

The sun
The burning heat of the sun
Look at it for too long that's no fun
I thought I lived in Austin
But I actually live in Boston
When I realized I just spun.

My friend jupiter
Jupiter full of gasses
Has a hope around it
Jupiter has 80 moons
I bet the nights are bright
If you jump in Jupiter
You'll just fall right through.

GRADE 5 WINNER

“Fly High Dad”

If I could write a story,

It would be for the greatest dad ever.

I wish you were here,

So I could see you smile again.

Everyday, I miss you dad.

I hope you're proud of me.

I wish I was with you.

You worked hard to make us happy,

But the only thing that makes me happy,

Is you.

I Miss You Dad.

OVERALL WINNER

“Parents Speaking Facts”

Kids: Why are you busy?
Why can't you play?
Why are you lazy?
Why are you always sleepy?
Why do you make me go to school?

Parents: If I wasn't busy we wouldn't have a house.
I can't play? If I played all the time we wouldn't have food.

I'm not lazy I just can't, if I was lazy you wouldn't be in soccer and
basketball.

I'm sleepy because each day except Sunday I'm up from
6am-10pm

And if you didn't go to school you wouldn't know ANYTHING!



"Don't tell me the moon
is shining; show me the
glint of light on broken
glass."

-Anton Chekhov

GRADE 6 WINNER

“Change Is Better Sometimes”

I see myself in the moment
I don't like what I see
I'm thinking what can I do to be better
I yell but I also get yelled at
I'm tired
I think I can do better
No...
I know I can do better
I wake up the next day
a new day.
A new person I see
A person I can be proud of
the new me.

Brandon Canales Paz
Ms. Riggs

GRADE 7 WINNER**“Are You Okay?”**

“Are you okay?”
 “Everyone has their off days, you’ll be fine”
 “Calm down, you’re overreacting,”
 These questions and concerns are frequent
 They fill my head day by day
 While I know you’re concerned, I’ll repeat “I’m okay”
 My troubles start to weigh
 Though I am in dismay
 I’ll continue to say that “I’m okay”

I have constant thoughts that abuse my emotions
 I feel that there’s no way out of these mixed commotions
 I am trapped inside my worries and stand in disarray
 I struggle to convey all the emotions I feel in one day
 I’m portrayed to people in many different ways
 But, no one seems to notice I’m in need of aid
 My worries become suffocating the thoughts in my head are on replay-
 Just to clear your doubts, I’ll repeat that “I’m okay”

I wish not to lie anymore about my struggles and well being
 I don’t want to stay in denial about my troubles, however it may seem
 My thoughts do not define me and neither do my emotions
 I’ll learn to put myself first and take slow approaches
 I won’t always be okay and have good days
 But I’m willing to accept that through my own way
 Hopefully one day I pick up the courage to say *‘I’m not okay’*

GRADE 8 WINNER

“DOES IT MATTER?”

Does my skin color matter ?

Is it fair?

I have to follow certain “rules” just because I have more melanin

I have to walk with my head up, don't put your hands in your pocket, no hoodies on your head or can't play with a toy gun outside.

Will I be labeled?

Just because I wear a certain color or listen to rap. Will they think I'm a thug or a gangbanger..

Will society accept me ?

I'm just as smart as others but they will think down on me because I come from a different part of town with lower income

Who can I blame?

Do I put it on them or me, because I was innocent but since someone else looks like me I was put in harm's way, but it's the parents fault for raising innocent children to hate and look down on others.

Is this all?

Is being “loud”, “ghetto”, “dumb”, “a killer” is all i'm going to be known for?

What about a scholar or a teacher maybe a vet or a talented and gifted child, how about another person in society who is trying to make it by just like EVERYONE ELSE.

So tell me does my skin color really matter?

Simiyah Cobbs
Mrs. Miller

OVERALL WINNER**“Math?”**

I never really ever liked math
 Never understood why I would ever need it in life
 until math was the only thing that I realized was always on my mind

Banana- 105 calories
 Cup of rice- 206 calories
 Chocolate - 214 calories

I miss the taste of chocolate so badly but I can't...
 I just don't wake up hungry
 Sure I might wait to see how long I can go without eating
 My body slowly is weakening
 Depression is sinking into my bones and I never worried so much about how much I was eating other then now

Monday - 115 pounds...
 It wouldn't hurt to skip lunch tomorrow...
 Thursday - 111
 Not thin enough.
 Sunday - 106
 Still not enough

Why can't I look like her
 A 24 inch waist seems like something nice to have...
 I went from counting sheep to sadly counting calories

In 6th I was 120
 To 115
 To 110
 Watching that number go down satisfies me
 Even if it means i'm getting colder
 Or if when I brush my hair alot of it falls out.
 It doesn't matter
 As long as the number decreases

I hate math.

*More than anything to be honest
 But I use and I need math
 More than anything.*

Marina Briones
Mrs. Miller

GRADE 6 WINNER

“The Wrongs of Today”

On right side of stairs
Students go up the wrong way
Shoving ‘till the top

Waiting in a line
Students cut, infuriate
Doesn’t look at us

Fighting every day
No peace, no love, always none
They will never learn

In the midst of school
I will move for everyone
No one moves for me

I wish it were safe
I wish people could just love
Never ever will

**Ryan Weber
Ms. Valentine**

GRADE 7 WINNER

“Normal Magic”

I pick up a pencil firmly in my hand
And I grab a sad empty paper

I need to think of something
Perhaps pleasurable
Something distinct and new
Something unimaginable

For whatever I think of
Can nearly come true
Using an amazing magic
Inside me and inside you

The magic may be a blessing or curse
If it isn't used it will simply get worse
It takes mountains of work
With the trials and error
If you really want to learn
You'll get through the terror

The magic difficult to tame
But easy to be half true
For my magic is simply art
And it is always somehow new

When I draw my soul is free
So I imagine what satisfies me

GRADE 8 WINNER

“Gallery Of Lies”

We always look down when we see that painting
We always turn our smiles into frowns when we see
that painting
Sometimes we wonder if we really painted that picture
for ourselves
Or did somebody else?

Sometimes we wonder why we have that painting
Sometimes we wonder why we need that painting

Sometimes we gaze into the picture
Walking through a state of haze assessing ourselves
Sayin’ “Oh crap, not this again”
“I don’t want to feel alone... left out again”

While examining our hair and eyes
Trying not to cry
Trying not to be overwise in counting all our oversize
False testimonies

Sometimes we ponder why we turn dark brown, dirty
blonde, golden blonde, black, red, orange crowns
Into dark brown, dirty blonde, golden blonde, black,
red, orange helmets

Sometimes we wonder why...
Why do we need to survive
In this art gallery of lies

Feeling at war
With our weak and delicate minds
Not knowing how to handle and appreciate this prize
That was given to us

Feeling beaten down
No more tears left to cry
Wanting to drown
No more tears left to shed
Desiring great renown
No more tears left to hide
Wondering why...
Why we need to feel like this on the inside

All for a stupid picture
This sickness that we cannot seem to cure
We can’t dare to stand up to the viewers and tell them
that they’re viewing our self-portrait wrong
We have to bear this somber song of a room and keep
our hopes up, high, and strong

Sometimes we ponder why we stop focusing
On our beautiful blue, brown, hazelnut eyes
And focus on the one tiny flaw
Keeping us from seeing our yearned self
Desiring to leave other people in awe
Wanting to keep ourselves hidden like a book on a
bookshelf

Or in this case a painting
A painting in a gallery
Further and further away from reaching spirituality
We can’t really distinguish the morality
Of this reality

Sometimes we wonder
But the answer is implied
“Ahh yes... there it is, the answer”
“The art gallery of lies”

Why should we spend all this energy
Focusing on all this negativity
Focus on the path to paint our own picture
Don’t focus on the obstacles that force us to stay thin

Or straight
Or beautiful
Or rich...

This list is never-ending to some eyes
What a perfect evil way to end our spiritual and
physical lives

Walking like a dead body waiting for that moment to
arise
The moment to end these neverending sighs

To end this deceit
That continues to deplete
Our self-respect
To end this demise
To end this art gallery of lies

Allan Hernandez
Mrs. Jones

OVERALL WINNER

“Hour Before Midnight”

Midnight was knocking on my brittle door
And coming with it twenty assignments pelting my scattered thoughts
Math To English History To Science
The incapability to finish seemed inescapable

Assignments that originally came to be effortless
Topped against each other
Building an indestructible wall
Filled with tediousness and apprehension

And resulting tension
From Teachers,
Friends,
Family
Separated from a false feeling of confidentiality
But I had to face reality

So many assignments to complete in this hour alone,
The wall came to be more intimidating by the second
And the consequences midnight would bring were beckoning

My room littered with remnants of high caffeinated bottles
To keep me through the night
And although I was confined in fright
Waiting for the light
Wouldn't quite
solve anything

I went to work
Time management was key
to completing this monotonous task
Thirty minutes in
And two-thirds of my assignments
were completed
Who knew focus
made me circumvent
The consequences that once stood in my path

My time was up
and it seemed as I had breached through
This difficult barrier
My increase in dedication
And pure luck
Led to timely success.

Sam Sirak
Mr. Hutson

GRADE 6 WINNER

“Beautifully Brown”

My hair,
Dark thick and curly,
Springy and twirly,
Brown skin kissed by the sun,
With deep brown eyes,
Soft plump lips,
And the face of a goddess,
I am proud to be as Beautifully Brown as I am

**Zoe Bryant
Ms. Dere**

GRADE 7 WINNER**“Drifting Away”**

To the child I call to,
 may your song be heard.
 The beautiful waves crashing together,
 forming a harmony of melodies.

Your sunlight casting rays
 like prisms shining on us all.
 A flame forever ignited,
 only temporarily dimmed.

The wheels never slowing,
 breezes continuously blowing.
 Cliffs and caves showing,
 while signs of life are growing.

Until - they suddenly stop.
 Every sign of hope stops.
 That is why I call to you, my dear child.
 You must never, never ever, stop.

Roads have paved ways for you,
 but you're the one driving.
 We have grown this nation from the
 ground,
 but you're the sign that we're evolving.

You must take flight,
 letting your spirit never rest.
 Open your eyes to what's in store,
 and even more, it awaits you.

So remember this light
 when you're lost in the dark;
 when your mind is a trap
 and an exit is just a dream.

We are proud of you.
 You have become a light,
 sometimes a little dim,
 but shining with resilience.

You have spread smiles like an infec-
 tion,
 everyone getting it all the time.
 You've brought laughter through grief,
 Hope through all the struggle.

While our spirits are resting,
 we are never gone from you.
 We are the stars of the night sky,
 compasses guiding you down this road.

You must push forward.
 our lives the spark of energy.
 The path is easier from here.
 Push forward for them, and, for me.

To the child drifting out at sea:
 You will never drift away from me.

-Emmy The Strange

GRADE 8 WINNER

“End of a Book”

Saying goodbye is the hardest part

Lessons learned through glassy eyes and broken hearts
Trials won and threads undone through the woven words of art
Lips brush tear stained cheeks and hands clasp those dried in blood
Through the crowds celebrations embraces are a flood
The family hugs and shrugs off the hardshells of their battle
Cheers are loud and faces proud absorbed among the gaggle
For the last time a laugh dances around the room
For the last time I stay hypnotized in the yellow pages perfume
Friends and foes are put to rest after each and every letter
Though it's just a book I swear its changed me for the better
Why must I come undone as the threads in all my sweaters
Going through the familiar feeling of drowning in the words of another
Living through the world of thin paper and dried ink
Grateful for the thoughts that allow my mind to think
I walk to my shelf wishing the characters the best
Thanking them for putting my darkest thoughts to rest

**Taryn MacMahon
Mr. Gildee**

OVERALL WINNER

“Nightmares”

Nightmares are what make you stronger, or they will break you down into crumbs for the dove.

Nightmares are when your little brother never returns from school, pierced in the heart by a deadly piece of lead and bronze.

The gold heart of one punctured by another

My brother.

Nightmares are when your parents drive away from home only for you to open the door to a grim-faced police officer awaiting you. He reads from a letter “I’m so sorry but...”

My Parents.

Nightmares are when your older brother dies in fear of falling from the sky. The great big wings of dazzling aluminum soar overhead yet collide in one final dance with gravity kissing the ground in a mighty yet deadly fashion.

My brother.

Nightmares are for you to brave.

We are all made of nightmares yet we are all made of dreams.

We are only able to control the present moment.

Our flesh and bones are who we are.

We cannot predict the nightmares that may become of tomorrow.

All we can do is to make a beautiful impact on those around us, and to love them to the best of our abilities.

You are capable of overcoming your nightmares and achieving your dreams.

You can be miserable or majestic, beast or beauty.

As literature recites, stand tall in the valley of darkness, for you are only just what you want to be.

GRADE 9 WINNER

“Things”

Things happen
Things happen for a reason
You look outside and watch the beautiful flowers grow
You look up to the sun and think to yourself
I am growing, I am growing

Ashlee Fuentes
Mrs. Fara Leigh Cepak

GRADE 11 WINNER

“So Cold”

Winter so cold
Much like my soul
Raging and lost, winter storm

Timeless prison
What’s my reason?
Moon heal this void
For one soul; numb and alone
Sun be my medicine
Done with this manic adrenaline

GRADE 12 WINNER

“Play”

Mad at trash game
Screaming and breaking materials
Continues to play out of anger

GRADE 9 WINNER

“Life”

Life,

It's hard and sometimes devastating, but why?
Why all the pain, hardship, and fear,
Why not have it your way, Why not just
Get what you want and be happy.

Well think about it, You would never be
Happy if life were sad, there would be no
Sadness, fear, or pain, without happiness.

If you were always happy, when would you be
Sad, If you were always sad and in Pain, when
Would you ever be happy? See, happiness in every
moment is something we want, but too much of it
Hurts. Sadness and pain in every moment would
hurt too, but both of them together creates this
thing called life.

It's full of happiness, pain, sadness, and confusion,
That requires strength to move on. Strength you ask,
Is more than just muscle, more than just force, more
than just intensity, it is the willingness to go on, even
when you are pulled back by the forces of evil.

Life,

It's hard and sometimes devastating, but why?
Life is hard because easy wouldn't be enough,
No challenge means no success, no success means
Progress. Life will never be easy but through it all
We need each other. With friends, family, neighbors,
And communities we must lean on each other, depend on each
Other, care for each other because violence, hate, war,
depression, pain, and sickness will not, and can not stop us.

Nairobi Dillard
Mr. Kountz

GRADE 10 WINNER

“Moments and Places”

I am from a place that is known for its precious blood gems
A place of fighters, survivors, and diamond divers
I am from one of the first countries in West Africa to attract European interest.
Places of history when my people and my ancestors were in the Atlantic slave trade
A place where mothers, fathers, and children cried as they were taken away from their families
A bloodline of Farmers, Hunters, Chiefs, Chieftainesses, Soule believers, women-only societies,
and of great African men and women who fought to restore democracy
I am from a small country in West Africa called Sierra Leone.

I am from the memories that replay in my head
A place of echoing voices of my people being sold into slavery.
As the evening breeze whooshed through the air
Moments of slaves being whipped till they start to bleed
I am from a place of fighters and survivors.

From my “ancestors’ wildest dreams”
A dream of waves of laughter and joy as my country became free from slave trades.
Of families and loved ones coming home back to us
A dream of our independence that was stolen from us for centuries
Of children’s voices filling the atmosphere with joy instead of suffrage
I am my ancestors’ wildest dreams.

Martha Kamara
Ms. Beaudet

GRADE 11 WINNER

“El Color Rojo”

It all starts with a spark
Fire in the vicinity
Igniting of the heart
The peak of divinity
La guitarra tocando
A branch of roses dancing
El espíritu sólo está logrando
As the other people start glancing
A long dress with exquisite details
The makeup, the hair, it all prevails
Hasta la gente fuera del barrio escuchan los gritos
¡Olé, Olé, manos arriba! ¡Vamos tías y tíos!
Agregar las palmas
Bulerías, Alegrías y Sevillanas
Las joyas tan puras y maravillosas
Tan bonita y hermosa que me amenazas
We won't stop until the music stops us
Our instruments tapping on the floor
Creando algo cerca a Venus
La más caliente, la más calor
The color red, yellow, and red
Tenemos muchas artimañas
Remember what they said
Las gitanas dicen, ¡Viva España!

GRADE 12 WINNER

“All I Needed”

Broke my heart; you know you left me scarred
Pain in my heart, legs weak; made me fall
I don't even know why I loved you
Don't know why I cuffed you
Couldn't even put my trust in you

The devil tried to hide you
Don't know where to find you
All I needed was your love

Give me one more break
Baby girl, you are my healing part
And yet, you are my heartbreak
Name is Lil' Tiez, I'm losing brain
I'm losing my mind
Can't even think straight
All I needed was your love

No one can understand what I felt, that healing pain
Like when they took my brother, you know- that healing pain
I feel like I'm just ducking twelve
I hit the right and switch lanes
My heart is as cold as December
All I needed was your love

Broke my heart; you know you left me scarred
Pain in my heart, legs weak; made me fall
I don't even know why I loved you
Don't know why I cuffed you
Couldn't even put my trust in you

All I wanted was your love

Dontiez Alston
Mr. Gray

ALL SCHOOL WINNER

“SWEET NOTHINGS”

The words I utter, do they have purpose,
or are they sweet nothings to fill up the vapid space within these walls.
Why must every word I speak be perfected to a T,
no mistakes, no errors, no faults,
perfection is what is expected and if it is less then
not only am I a failure but my entire community is.

They’ve propelled me to fulfill the role as their token,
I am their access to the “experience” when I’ve barely experienced life myself,
but education, yes education is beneficial to everyone
I just need to educate them,
regardless if the stories I tell,
the lessons we teach,
drain the joy within my body

My body,
the sovereignty of my body is taken away,
it’s used as a “show”
it’s a commodity to be shown and presented and bought and sold,
ever since slavery we’ve fought to regain and reconnect with our bodies,
when can our bodies be ours and only ours, with no expectations.

Why can’t I just shut up and speak when I’m told and help them,
why do you have to be so stubborn.
So I sit, I sit and smile and laugh, as if my mind is empty,
but little do they know I’m planning the next sentences I say,
how I say them,
the facial expressions I use,
my posture,
because they watch every single move,
they pretend they don’t but I know they do.

I pray for the day when my words are no longer calculated and tailored,
but spontaneous and reckless,
I start the flames with glee in my eyes and watch as the world burns
but until then my words
are sweet nothings to fill up the vapid space within these walls.

"A poet's work ...
to name the
unnamable,
to point at frauds, to
take sides,
start arguments,
shape the world,
and stop it from
going to sleep."

~Salman Rushdie

Allie Cain

Allie Cain is a fifth grade creative powerhouse! Allie is a gifted artist and writer. Allie is funny, friendly and nice. Allie's favorite subjects are Reading and Social Studies. Her favorite sport is soccer, her favorite color is blue and her favorite book is *A Good Kind of Trouble*. A few places Allie would like to visit include Paris, France to eat pastries and see the Eiffel Tower; Egypt to see the Great Sphinx, great Pyramids and the museums; Seoul, Korea just to see what it looks like and then to revisit Cancun, Mexico.

Allie is thankful for food because it tastes good and keeps her alive. She can often be seen reading as she enjoys her lunch each day. One source of Allie's happiness is technology because she can find almost anything online, such as how-to's, memes, and research.

Allie is thankful for her family for keeping her comfy and making her feel loved. Along with her parents, little sister Aime, and her dog, we all celebrate Allie's poetry today and look forward for more great moments to come for this incredible scholar.

Creativity Award Elementary

Hayden Wixom

Sylvia Rahim

Sylvia Rahim is one of our most creative and talented young thinkers and writers. As a student, Sylvia's quiet, thoughtful, and discerning character makes her an exceptional observer of our beautiful and fractured world, and these traits are evident in her exceptional work as a poet. She writes with grace and sharp clarity, frequently demonstrating a wisdom beyond her years. Another aspect of Sylvia's writing is that it is frequently bold and ambitious. Anyone who has heard Sylvia perform and recite poetry or seen her act as a part of our school's Fall play won't be surprised by the gentle yet daring quality of her voice. Sylvia has the power to move an audience with her words, and our class, school, city, and world are better places thanks to her.

Creativity Award Secondary

Sam Sirak

Acknowledgements

Elementary Poetry Liaisons

Ms. Michelle Nettleton, John Adams Elementary School
Ms. Ellen Patisall, Charles Barrett Elementary School
Mr. Jacob Bennett, Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School
Dr. Andrea Manninen, Patrick Henry Elementary School
Ms. Kara Collins, Jefferson-Houston K-8 School
Ms. Mary Reuter, Cora Kelly School for Math, Science, and Technology
Ms. Karrie Kay, Lyles Crouch Traditional Academy
Ms. LaTrania Martin, Douglas MacArthur Elementary School
Ms. Kara Mehrman, George Mason Elementary School
Ms. Sarah Calhoun, Naomi L. Brooks Elementary School
Ms. Maria Fletcher, Mount Vernon Community School
Ms. Kathryn Harrington, James Polk Elementary School
Ms. Kelly Davis, Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School
Ms. Regina VanBuren, William Ramsay Elementary School

Secondary Poetry Liaisons

Ms. Kara Franklin-Taylor, Francis C. Hammond Middle School
Ms. Imani Thaniel, George Washington Middle School
Ms. Shaina Thompson, Jefferson-Houston K-8 School
Ms. Pamela Reynolds, Alexandria City High School- Minnie Howard Campus
Ms. Rachel Alberts, Alexandria City- King Street Campus

Additional Thanks

Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Superintendent
Dr. Terri H. Mozingo, Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Dr. Gerald R. Mann, Executive Director of Instructional Support
Secondary and Elementary ACPS Principals
Ms. Richelda Tirado, ACPS Teaching, Learning, and Leadership Office
Alexandria City High School Labyrinth Staff
Mr. Scott (Taki) Sidley, Alexandria City High School - King Street Campus
Ms. Alexandra (Sasha) Dafkova, 10th Grade Student, ACHS
Mrs. Suzanne Lank, ACPS English Learners Office
Ms. Michelle Biber, Beatley Central Library Youth Services Manager
Ms. Kanikki Jakarta, Alexandria City Poet Laureate
Mr. Cory Kapelski, ACPS Office of Talent Development
Ms. Erica Doody, ACPS Central Office

Thank you to all of our ACPS
teachers and staff who provide quality
instruction in order for students to build, develop,
explore, and refine their literacy skills. We are able to
celebrate our students and hear their voices because
of your dedication to education day in and day out.
That work is critical to fulfilling our ACPS Strategic
Plan and our vision statement:

**Equity for All: Empowering All Students to
Thrive in a Diverse and Ever-Changing World**

