



**ALEXANDRIA CITY
HIGH SCHOOL**

KING STREET: 3330 KING STREET, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22302

MINNIE HOWARD: 3801 W BRADDOCK RD, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22302

CHANCE FOR CHANGE: 216 S PEYTON ST, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

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Alexandria City High School Principal Leadership Profile

1. The Educational Landscape: A Multi-Campus Unified Vision

Alexandria City High School (ACHS) is a 4,500+ student ecosystem and the sole public high school in Alexandria, VA. It is both the "crown jewel" of the community and an institution with significant operational demands. The next principal must be a strategic architect capable of unifying four distinct campuses—King Street, Minnie Howard, Satellite, and Chance for Change—into a single, high-performing system.

The foundational strengths of ACHS are extraordinary.

- **The "Remember the Titans" Legacy:** A deep, city-wide historical pride that serves as a unifying force and a high-stakes mandate for excellence.
- **Global Diversity:** With students from over 100 countries, the school is a microcosm of the world, anchored by the International Academy, which provides a specialized, essential "newcomer" experience.
- **The Academies at Alexandria City:** A model designed to provide small-school connection within a large-scale structure, though it requires a leader to move it beyond "pathways in name only."
- **Institutional Partnerships:** Robust ties with Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) for Dual Enrollment and the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria (SFA), which provides unparalleled post-secondary support.
- **Dedicated Professional Staff:** A talent pool that upholds the "Once a Titan, Always a Titan" legacy while committed to excellence through operational changes.

This complexity necessitates a "dedicated long-term leader" who can manage high-level operations without losing sight of the individual student's need for belonging.

Survey Methodology & Scope

To define this profile, ACPS solicited comprehensive feedback from students, staff, families, and community members. The survey evaluated institutional strengths, prioritized systemic challenges, and identified the character traits required to lead an organization of this scale. In the quantitative sections of this report, a Response Scale of **1 (Not Important)** to **5 (Essential)** is utilized to ground the analysis in stakeholder priorities. This data-driven synthesis serves as the primary blueprint for identifying a leader capable of fostering institutional coherence while honoring the school's unique identity

2. Operational Excellence and Multi-Campus Coordination

ACHS is defined by a "One City, One High School" ethos that provides a unifying cultural touchstone for Alexandria. Stakeholders view the school's extraordinary diversity—with representation from over 100 countries—not merely as a demographic fact, but as a core competitive advantage that prepares students for a globalized society.

Primary Institutional Strengths

Strength	Strategic Impact
Exceptional Diversity	Fosters a global, inclusive community; central to "Titan" identity.
Dedicated Teaching Faculty	High-caliber instructors who provide stability despite systemic pressures.
Advanced Academics	Robust AP, Dual Enrollment (DE), and Governor's Health Sciences offerings.
Specialized Pathways	Strong International Academy, CTE, and Academy of Finance (AOF) programs.
Community Legacy	"Remember the Titans" history and elite Arts/Athletics (e.g., Orchestra).

The "Special Place" Identity

Stakeholder feedback identifies three pillars that make ACHS unique:

- **The Unifying Force:** As the city's single high school, ACHS bridges a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, creating a shared experience for all Alexandrians.
- **The Academy Model Paradox:** While the Academy structure is praised for creating "small communities," it is currently viewed as a strategic growth point—often described as "pathways in name only" or "segregated" by campus.
- **Legacy of Resilience:** Stakeholders take immense pride in programs like "Titans Robotics" and the student newspaper *Theogony*.

Programmatic Growth

The incoming leader must move beyond "surface-level" inclusion to strengthen support for the International Academy, CTE, and Special Education. Stakeholders demand that the next principal ensure these programs are robustly funded and that the Academy model is clarified, as many staff and students report feeling "disconnected" from its intended purpose.

Operational Imperatives for the Multi-Campus Model

Community-Identified Friction Point	Leadership Requirement
Inter-campus Transitions: Late buses and multicampus transitions between King Street and Minnie Howard.	Logistical Mastery: Synchronizing the bell schedule and transportation to eliminate "shuttle-lag" and protect instructional time.
"Minga" and Digital Friction: Frustration over the digital hall-pass system and "metal detector" bottlenecks.	Systems Refinement: Streamlining security and movement protocols to ensure safety without creating a carceral atmosphere.
Off-campus distractions: Contributing to increased truancy and disruption.	Off-Campus Coordination: Partnering with local businesses.
Staff Workload and Burnout: Teachers need to protect instructional and planning time.	Administrative Streamlining: Protecting teacher planning time and instructional time.

3. Instructional Leadership: Equity, Rigor, and Achievement

In a system of this scale, the principal must be the "Lead Learner," ensuring that high expectations are a universal across all campuses and academies.

The instructional leadership expectations include:

1. **Closing Achievement Gaps with Specificity:** Aggressively addressing the disparities in SOL passing rates and graduation rates for students of color, moving beyond surface-level inclusivity to measurable academic gains.
2. **Support for Special Education and EL:** Supporting English Learners and Specialized Instruction to meet the needs of students and staff. : Data must be used not just for compliance, but also to improve academic outcomes for multilingual learners and students with disabilities.

3. **Tier 1 Instructional Excellence and "Titan Time"**: Focusing on Tier 1 excellence in every classroom and working strategically with staff to provide intervention support during the school day, ensuring every classroom delivers high-quality, bell-to-bell instruction. The survey supports dedicated time for community-building and academic support as a high-priority instructional requirement.
4. **Quality over Quantity in Pathways**: Supporting the quality of the academy model to ensure that every pathway provides a "sequential elective" experience with tangible certifications.

The next principal inherits a climate characterized by high instructional aspirations coupled with high operational needs. Success requires a leader who can balance the "extraordinary diversity" of the student body with the urgent need to close persistent achievement gaps.

Challenge Area Priority Matrix

Stakeholders have identified a clear hierarchy of urgency. While most areas are high-priority, the data reveal that operational safety and staff retention outweigh the expansion of elective offerings. The principal must act as the instructional leader, ensuring that the high school's 4500+ students receive a high-quality education regardless of their assigned campus.

Challenge Area	Urgency Rating	Leadership Implication
Student Behavior & School Climate	5	Must address student behavior and cell phone use.
Closing Achievement Gaps	5	Urgent focus on Multilingual Learners and Special Education.
Staff Recruitment & Retention	5	Increase staff retention to prevent teachers from leaving for other districts.
Student Attendance/Engagement	4	Work collaboratively as a school to improve chronic absenteeism.
Improving Academic Outcomes	4	Ensure that the ACHS student performance outcomes reflect mastery in reading/math.
Expanding Advanced Coursework	3	Maintain existing rigor before expanding further, while also maintaining the instructional standard of honors, AP, and Dual Enrollment Courses

Operational Complexity: Multi-Campus Leadership

Leading a school distributed across King Street, Minnie Howard, Satellite, and Chance for Change is described as a role requiring a master of logistics. The next principal must also extend and prioritize their leadership to the Satellite Campus and Chance for Change Academy, ensuring these programs are not "forgotten silos" but are integrated into the broader Titan identity.

Ranking of Multi-Campus Abilities

1. **Coordinating Leadership:** Aligning campus principals/deans to ensure "one message" across four sites.
2. **Large-Scale Logistics:** Managing the "nuts and bolts" of transportation and facility equity.
3. **Consistent Academic Expectations:** Guaranteeing that the rigor at all campuses (Minnie Howard/King Street/Chance For Change, and Satellite) are consistent.

4. School Climate: Attendance, Behavior, and Student Engagement

Qualitative data points to three critical objectives that must be addressed immediately to restore institutional trust:

Pillar A: Restoring Accountability: Establishing "firm lines" regarding student behavior.

Pillar B: Fostering Micro-Cultures: Combatting the "feeling of disconnection" by building small learning communities within the Academies. Every Titan must be anchored to a "trusted adult" and a "trusted pathway" to make 5,000 students feel like a family.

Pillar C: Engaging Student Voice: Reclaiming "Titan Pride" by elevating the arts, athletics, and student publications like *Theogony*. Success is defined by a school environment where students want to be present because they feel respected and challenged.

5. The Ideal Personal Profile: Qualities of the Next Titan Leader

The Alexandria community is calling for a "dedicated, committed, and innovative" leader—a public figure who possesses the attributes of a turnaround leader and the sophistication to represent ACHS to a global city.

- **High Visibility:** The next principal must be a constant presence in the hallways, cafeterias, and at community events across all campuses.
- **Assertive Advocacy and "Backbone":** The next principal should serve as a strong champion of "Titan Pride," modeling school spirit and consistently advocating for the needs of the school community.
- **Cultural Responsiveness:** A deep, demonstrated ability to navigate a globally diverse community with humility, ensuring that the International Academy and families of all backgrounds feel they have a seat at the table.
- **Approachability and Trust-Building:** Being visibly present to build relational trust with families, students, and staff through transparent, honest, and follow-through-oriented leadership.

6. Collaborative Leadership: Staff Empowerment and Community Partnership

The Principal of ACHS serves as a highly visible and influential leader within the community, building strong relationships and representing the school with pride. The community seeks a "strong, independent leader" who will prioritize the school's interests over district bureaucracy. The principal must embrace a model of distributed leadership. Staff must be treated as respected professionals.

Personal Leadership Characteristics

Quality	Importance	Stakeholder Expectation
Integrity and Honesty	5	Build relational trust
Approachability	5	Must be visible
Cultural Responsiveness	5	Empathy for a "complicated, diverse population" across all demographics.
Strategic Decision-Making	5	A "CEO mindset" regarding HR, budget, and systemic execution.

Additional Aspects For Collaborative Success:

- **Reduce "Initiative Fatigue":** Stopping the cycle of new programs that "drown" teachers; focusing on doing the "basics" exceptionally well.
- **Transparent, Centralized Communication:** Fixing the "fragmented" messaging by implementing a unified Events Calendar and timely, multilingual updates for the PTA and families.
- **Empower Site-Based Leadership:** Giving Campus Administrators and Deans the autonomy to lead their buildings while holding them strictly accountable for climate and instruction.
- **Leverage the "Titans" Ecosystem:** Actively utilizing partnerships with local businesses and NVCC to expand internships and career readiness.

7. Year 1 and the 3-5 Year Success Roadmap

The successful candidate will be defined by their ability to generate "momentum through action".

Year 1: Foundation, Stability, and Staff Retention

The long-term success of ACHS depends on the transition from a collection of fragmented campuses to a "fully coherent, high-performing system."

What Success Looks Like

1. **Measurable Gap Reduction:** Significant academic gains for Multilingual Learners and Special Education students.
2. **Staff Stability:** A dramatic reduction in the "hundreds of great staff" leaving each year; a culture where teachers feel "respected and safe."
3. **Systemic Coherence:** A unified student experience where the "shuttle bus situation" is a solved logistical problem and the Academy model provides true, non-segregated pathways.

Strategic Advice Summary

The collective voice of the Titan community suggests a "revolutionary" shift in leadership:

- "Listen intentionally, but avoid over-listening without action."
- "Pace the work—you cannot do everything in 100 days, so nail the basics first."
- "Don't try to change everything; respect the history before you try to write the future."

Years 3-5: The Premier High School

Success is defined by ACHS becoming the "premier high school in the region," successfully competing with private schools and neighboring districts. This will be evidenced by significantly narrowed achievement gaps for EL and Special Education students, a stabilized workforce with minimal turnover, and a unified Titan community where four campuses function as one world-class system.

ACHS is the heart of Alexandria. The next principal is the custodian of the city's future, ensuring that the phrase "**Once a Titan, Always a Titan**" represents a promise of excellence kept for every child.