As one of the candidates running for a seat in District A, MIMI CARTER is pushing for As — accountability, accessibility, and adaptability.

“We should be able to be really innovative and as a $200 million organization we should be able to really have the services, the technology and the programs that are some of the best in the country,” Carter said, explaining her campaign’s focus on seeing more program evaluation, increased access to top-notch programs for students and teachers and an ability to make existing programs work.

Carter brings with her an extensive history of involvement in Alexandria, including her work as co-founder of the “State of the Schools” forum for parents considering ACPS schools as well as leadership in the PTA and after-school programs at Mt. Vernon Community School.

She also wrote a book on early childhood education in the D.C. metro area, The Insiders Guide to Child Care in Washington DC, which Carter said gave her a good idea about what goes into a successful pre-kindergarten program.

“We need to have a systematic preschool program,” Carter said. “[The current program] is just here and there throughout ACPS, and we really need to do a better job of ensuring quality.”

According to Carter, the biggest issue facing the schools is the need for accountability and putting a system in place to evaluate programs effectively. In working to remedy the achievement gap, she said there needs to be a mentoring program involving proper training for general education teachers, as well as an emphasis on early childhood education.

“The best dropout prevention program is pre-school,” she said. “All the statistics are there about how kids who get a quality educational experience in pre-school are much less likely to drop out of school later on.”