

General points:

- **APS is growing and has reached a point where our choices for the future are between change and change.** Using a strategic countywide perspective, we seek to manage change in a way that supports instruction, focuses resources in the classroom, and keeps more of our school communities together.
- **We need neighborhood seats in high-growth areas.** Option schools are vital to managing enrollment growth and must be part of this process along with neighborhood schools. APS has moved countywide option schools before and these continue to excel in offering our students multiple pathways to success.
- **The timing of this four-phase process was developed to address challenges before new boundaries are created.** A decision in February 2020 to move some option schools in their entirety and the majority of one or two neighborhood schools will allow APS to keep many more neighborhood school students together during the next boundary process. It also allows APS to coordinate a process for new school principals and PTAs so we can begin to involve communities in preparation for opening in 2021.
- **As enrollment growth continues, we must do all we can to manage operating costs.** There are competing demands on the APS budget and by strategically maximizing the opportunities for students to walk or bike to school, we are able to make the ongoing demands on our bus system manageable, allowing us to direct resources to other needs.
- **APS will have a boundary process in the fall of 2020. Elementary boundaries are not being developed at this point.** Factors that are a part of boundary process, such as capacity utilization or demographics are not a part of this planning phase. APS will consider the six School Board policy considerations in the Fall 2020 boundary process.
- **The PreK-12 Instructional Program Pathways (IPP) is not shaping staff's proposals for this process.** The IPP is a structural framework mapping out academic pathways. This new framework is evolving and will continue to be fully developed by instructional leaders with stakeholder input.
- **The APS Engage site has information resources.** We know there's a lot of information being distributed across the community about this process, and not all of it is accurate. We encourage community members to check APS information resources at the APS Engage site and send their questions to engage@apsva.us.

Specific Common Questions

1. **No option schools will be closed. If any proposal is adopted, this would result in some elementary schools moving to another facility without changing their instructional models.**
 - a. **Will you shut down Arlington Traditional, Campbell Expeditionary Learning or an Immersion program?** No. The option schools would have the same instructional models that they do today, but instruction would take place in a different building.

- b. **Why is Arlington Traditional not included in the PreK-12 Instructional Program Pathways, also known as the IPP?** The IPP is a structural framework that maps out the APS instructional pathways. It is in an early stage and is still evolving. We're excited to welcome our new Asst. Superintendent of Teaching and Learning who will work with instructional leaders in continuing to develop the IPP.
 - c. **Some people have suggested doing away with option schools and just having neighborhood schools - are there any plans to do that?** No. APS provides multiple pathways for student success within our system of neighborhood schools and some options.
 - d. **Can APS provide neighborhood preference to option schools?** No, this process will not change School Board policy for options and transfers. We will continue to use a double-blind lottery application process for admission to option schools and programs.
2. **This is not a boundary process. The proposals explore only moving some schools, without proposing boundaries. No boundaries will be developed until the fall of 2020.**
- a. **Why don't you just adjust boundaries and not move any schools?** APS must address the need for seats in high-growth areas of the county as well as the imbalance within the county between where there is neighborhood school capacity and where there are students. Just creating neighborhood boundaries will result in long, extended boundaries that do not include their full walk zones and will result in more neighborhood students being reassigned to various schools. Also, these type of boundaries means significantly fewer students can walk to their neighborhood schools, leading to more demand on APS transportation services and resources.
 - b. **Why don't you develop new boundaries at the same time that you consider school moves?** It is important to first determine where the option schools will be located and then develop boundaries around each neighborhood school. Deciding now which schools will move means that significantly fewer neighborhood school students will be reassigned to various schools during the boundary process. Also, once we know which school will need a new principal and a new PTA, APS can then begin working with that specific community to begin the work needed to prepare for opening a school.
 - c. **Why do the proposals show that schools would have a wide range of capacity utilization?** They don't. Any conclusions drawn about capacity utilization from these proposals are premature. The proposals were created to explore proposed school moves. Some community members have used the data APS has posted online to speculate about new boundaries and they have drawn some wrong conclusions. APS staff will not develop new school boundaries until Fall 2020, and capacity utilization will be part of that process.
3. **Countywide schools can be located at any school in the county. Any option school that is moved will maintain academic excellence.**
- a. **Why are option schools involved in this process?** Option schools have always been important to managing enrollment growth. APS has added classes at option schools when seats have been needed for students. Since option schools enroll students from throughout the county, their need for APS bus transportation remains constant. While boundary processes typically only include neighborhood schools, this time APS

included option schools in order to better manage attendance zones and resources, and to keep far more neighborhood school students at their current schools. If APS does not move some schools, then far larger numbers of neighborhood school students will be reassigned to various schools during the boundary process next year.

- b. **Won't moving an option school be detrimental to instruction?** APS has moved option schools in the past and these have continued to thrive and be popular choices for families. Last year, for example, APS moved the Montessori program into its own school building and moved the H-B Woodlawn and Shriver programs to a new building. Arlington Traditional started in a different building from the one it's in now; moving to another facility was not a barrier to its success and it continues to be a popular option with a waitlist of more than 600 students. If any schools move, APS will work with school leadership to determine the needs of their instructional models in a new building and ensure that students can learn and thrive in healthy, safe and supportive learning environments.
- c. **Why don't you conduct a survey or analysis to determine how many families would actually move with option schools versus transferring to their neighborhood schools?** Families with students at option schools can choose at any time to transfer to their neighborhood schools. This is true regardless of how they may answer a survey. We hear from families at option schools that they are committed to the school, but we understand that each family must consider their own situation and make the best decision for them whether to continue with an option school that has moved or transfer to their neighborhood school.

4. Demographics are not a part of this planning process. During the Fall 2020 boundary process, demographics will be one of the six School Board policy considerations used to adjust boundaries and develop new attendance zones.

- a. **Won't moving Arlington Traditional from its current building to the McKinley building lead to a decline in this program's diversity?** We have no reason to believe that moving Arlington Traditional two miles away from its current location will lead to a significant decline in enrollment. The families at Arlington Traditional are passionate about their program and have spoken to the ways their students benefit from this option. Every family must make the decision that is right for them and option school students have the choice between continuing with an option program or enrolling in their neighborhood school. McKinley is accessible, sits between Wilson Blvd. and Washington Blvd., and was able to accommodate at least 20 buses during the 2019 summer school program, more than any elementary option school currently uses. The move to a larger building will allow Arlington Traditional to accept at least 100 more students from its waitlist of 600+ students, many of whom are siblings.
- b. **How do demographics factor into this planning process?** They are not part of this initial phase. When APS develops boundaries in Fall 2020, demographics will be one of the six School Board policy considerations that guide the development of new boundaries. Staff will review and analyze data at each school to determine the percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced-cost meals. This data does not factor into the school move proposals—these proposals allow students to move together, regardless of their demographics.