

## APPENDIX: Emails to APS Engage and the School Board until 9/15

### SWING SPACE

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Email to School Board (SB)

Dear APS School Board,

Today, we learned that the Planning & Evaluation Department is going to make a proposal tonight to eliminate Nottingham as a neighborhood school. This irresponsible proposal has blindsided our community and is already causing significant alarm. I know that hundreds of other Nottingham parents will be equally concerned.

As you know, APS proposed to eliminate Nottingham several years ago for different reasons and that proposal was rejected, but only after an intensive effort by the community to save the school. Nottingham is a vibrant, valued neighborhood school, with an amazing leadership team and incredible teams. It is not a convenient holding spot for students to advance APS' long term capital renovation plans.

The Nottingham community opposes this proposal. Our parents are invested and committed to keeping the school and will not stop until APS does. The Board should reject the proposal at this stage, rather than allowing a year of controversy and campaigning.

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SB

I'm a resident of Arlington County. I moved recently with [redacted] from Fairfax county. My [redacted] will be starting at Nottingham Elementary in the 2023-2024 and 2025-2026 school years. We are walking distance to the school and were recently made aware of the Pre-CIP and proposal to turn Nottingham into swing space. I reviewed the Pre-CIP and believe it lacks answers to basic questions, such as: Which schools need rehousing? When? For how long? What renovations will be undertaken? How much will those renovations cost? Has the budget for these renovations already been secured? Has a traffic impact and safety study been done for my neighborhood? and many more.

I know that prospective demography is not an exact science, and neither is anecdotal evidence about move in trends. However, I know that the discussion about Nottingham not being at capacity and projecting it to remain at the under capacity levels (that justify it turning into swing space as having the smallest impact) just does not seem to square with the reality I'm seeing. Nottingham THIS YEAR is having to hire and start a 3rd kindergarten classroom because of higher enrollment. The 3rd teacher starts this year, and those students will be populating the school for years to come. On my square block alone, there are at least 5 families with children enrolled into Nottingham kindergarten this coming 2023-2024 school year. Plus, each of those families has at least one younger sibling that will be enrolling at the school as well.

There is so much to discuss with this proposal and the negative impact it will have, that has not been considered or borne out in the Pre-CIP documentation, that I hope the school board will rethink this proposal.

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SB

As a mother of [redacted] at Nottingham Elementary School (NES), I'm writing in opposition to the Arlington CIP plan published on June 29. Decimating a strong and cohesive elementary school community that we've built over many years would be counter to what Nottingham students need to preserve our close-knit community and rebound after years lost from the pandemic.

The CIP proposal was released as summer got into full swing and families were taking a break from the spring grind. However, the proposed timeline to make decisions seems extraordinarily condensed; families will return to school at the end of August and have mere days to react and respond if they weren't dialed in over the summer about this proposal. That includes NES families AND the other schools that will be undergoing renovations or receiving displaced students from schools being renovated. That short timeframe seems harsh and unnecessary – why the huge rush? Many other decisions that have been made by the county are much more drawn out, with many months for those impacted to weigh in and ask questions.

With transparency in mind, there are lots of unanswered questions about how Nottingham was chosen as the school selected to become swing space.

How long will NES shut down for? It doesn't specify in the CIP report, rather just says at some point it could go back to being a neighborhood school. That lack of clarity is unsettling for those of us with current and future NES students, as well as the many neighbors who would be impacted by a change in traffic, schedule, etc. Our community fully surrounds the campus.

Are we looking at five years from implementation NES could reemerge? Ten? Fifteen? We would like more concrete information than that.

How old is the data used for the projections of APS students in the coming years? APS should take a current census to capture recent move-ins to Arlington to get a complete picture of the true numbers. Those of us at NES collectively know heaps of young students waiting to start school, despite APS projecting flat or decreasing enrollment. That doesn't seem to match what we know in the community. The other factor that could change numbers in the coming years is the Langston Blvd Plan and Missing Middle Plan, both of which are likely to cause a significant uptick in enrollment numbers in schools like Nottingham.

Next, why is keeping all of the students together from a renovating school a priority, rather than keeping neighborhood schools together that are thriving? Why can't the school that's being renovated disperse its students to 2 or 3 schools the way the proposal suggests NES split up? If that school is going to come back together ultimately after the renovation time period, whereas there's no guarantee that's the case for NES, why should NES be the one taking the blow and shutting down?

Right now, more than 80 percent of the community enjoys living walking distance to Nottingham, which benefits both the environment and the health of the families who commute on foot and by scooter/bike.

Those two factors should not be taken lightly, given the growing environmental crisis and rising obesity rates among younger children. We all owe it to the APS community to be better stewards of the environment and the health of families.

Many of us specifically chose to move to this community for the walkable neighborhood school. I grew up outside of [redacted] in a small suburb and walked to school from kindergarten to fifth grade and I explicitly wanted that for my children. I know it's the case for many other NES families.

Through the efforts of countless staff and families, we have built one big family at Nottingham. The current proposal seems short-sighted, not fully thought out and lacking accurate, timely data.

I'd strongly recommend APS slow down the process and think through other cost-effective, fair options that don't destroy a flourishing community like the one we have at Nottingham.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important community matter. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

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SB

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Board's 2023 Pre-Capital Improvement Plan Report ("Report"). As the parent of a future Nottingham Elementary School ("Nottingham") student and an Arlington Public School ("APS") community member, I have several concerns about the proposal to turn Nottingham into a swing space. I believe additional studies and data are needed and alternative solutions should be considered before this proposal moves forward.

First, the Report does not appropriately define the problem it is trying to solve. The Report does not include a proposed list of schools to be renovated, an estimated timeline for such renovations, estimates of how many students will need to be moved to the swing space, or other similar details. Without this information, it is impossible to judge whether (1) a permanent or semi-permanent swing space is needed at all, or (2) if it is needed, if Nottingham is the right choice. For example, Nottingham may not be centrally located to the schools that are being temporarily closed. Or Nottingham may not have the capacity to handle all the temporarily displaced students. Without additional information or supporting data, the choice to close Nottingham seems to be arbitrary and capricious at best.

Second, the Report does not contain sufficient data or studies on enrollment trends. The Report does acknowledge that initiatives such as Missing Middle and the Langston Blvd Development Project may result in increased enrollment, but it does not meaningfully address or engage with these issues. The county has already seen dozens of Missing Middle-related applications in the short time the initiative has been approved, and more time and research are needed to assess the impact on enrollment for Nottingham and other nearby schools. It is shortsighted to close a thriving neighborhood school, and cause nearby schools to be pushed to or past capacity, only to discover Nottingham needs to be reopened a few years from now if and when enrollment trends are likely to change due to these initiatives.

Third, the Report does not appropriately consider or explore the safety and traffic impacts of the proposal. The immediate area surrounding Nottingham is notorious for multiple pedestrian fatalities in the past 8 years. The county recently put in additional stop signs near Nottingham, but there has been

no opportunity for a follow-up study as to whether this has made a significant difference in safety to current pedestrians. Additionally, the roads near Nottingham, such as North Ohio Street, are too narrow for an influx of buses and additional car traffic twice a day. Due to parked cars on both sides of the road, most vehicles already cross the double yellow line in between lanes of traffic because of the limited space on the roads. Further, the Nottingham neighborhood is highly pedestrian and most students currently walk to school. Additional traffic studies for vehicles and pedestrians, and a walkability study, are needed to determine the impact on the Nottingham neighborhood's safety and traffic patterns.

Fourth, parents at other affected schools, including Discovery, Tuckahoe, and the schools undergoing planned renovations, must be specifically informed of this plan so that their input on how this proposal will affect their communities and children can be considered. For example, because Nottingham is not centrally located to many APS schools, students at schools being temporarily renovated may need to be bussed for longer periods and/or parents may need to account for much longer drop off and pick up times, requiring those parents to have significant disruption in their daily lives. Because full information is not included in the Report regarding the potential schools to be renovated, these parents have no idea that they may be substantially affected by the proposal.

Finally, I would like to offer one possible alternative solution that the Board should consider in lieu of permanently closing any school: temporarily move students whose schools are getting renovated to nearby schools with capacity. This solution would mean that students that are already being displaced will only be temporarily split up instead of permanently displacing hundreds of other students at Nottingham, Discovery, and Tuckahoe. This would also leave open the possibility that displaced students could be accommodated at schools located closer to them, meaning less travel time and disruption to their daily lives. Moreover, the burden of the displaced students would be then split amongst several communities, lessening the negative impacts to any one community.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

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SB

I am writing to you today in opposition of the pre-CIP proposal to repurpose Nottingham Elementary School in 2026. While there will undoubtedly be an impact on Nottingham families should this proposal pass, I write to you today regarding my concern for the many families who are likely to be impacted who have yet to be identified.

Upon looking at the data provided on page 97 of the pre-CIP report, there are a few critical data points that struck me:

- \* There are 13 elementary schools who have not been renovated since 2004 or earlier.
- \* Of these 13 schools, 8 are located in South Arlington.
- \* The top 5 oldest - presumably the schools high on the list for renovations (Barcroft, Randolph, Long Branch, Hoffman-Boston, and Oakridge) - are all located in South Arlington.
- \* The top 4 oldest (Barcroft, Randolph, Long Branch, and Hoffman-Boston) are all identified as Title I schools.

\* Nearly 30% of APS students are enrolled in Extended Day (calculated based on APS Extended Day enrollment data and Sept. 2022 pre-CIP report enrollment data).

Why did I find this information striking? It comes down to location and equity. If Nottingham is identified as the swing space for these schools or other schools located far from Nottingham, there will undoubtedly be an undue hardship on many of these families and children.

This past week, my kids attended a camp located just 1 mile from Randolph Elementary. When I left at 2:30 PM to pick up my kids (from my home [redacted] from Nottingham), it took me a full 25 minutes to arrive simply due to how I hit the lights - not due to rush hour traffic. The total time to pick up the kids and return home was nearly an hour. Now, let's imagine how this timing might change for families enrolled in Extended Day at the Nottingham site. It might take them another 15 minutes, meaning that the time it takes them to simply pick up their kids after work may be upwards of 80 minutes. This could mean that young children being picked up when Extended Day closes may not get home until nearly 7 PM.

When families make arguably one of the most important decisions of their lives - where to lay down roots - schools are undeniably a top factor in their choice. And the vast majority of public schools are located close to a child's home. By forcing families to either commute or bus their children across the county, we are not only negatively impacting our environment and increasing traffic - but also taking away from doing valuable things like spending time with family members, making a home-cooked meal, or playing outside.

Beyond taking into consideration the time it would take these families to get to their kids, or the time children would spend on the bus, there is another critical factor to think about. The first four elementary schools on the list are low-income Title 1 schools. Have we considered that some of these families may not have a car to pick up their kids? Or may need access to public transportation to do so?

For example, based on APS Extended Day enrollment data & Appendix A-3 of the pre-CIP report, for a sample of schools (Barcroft, Randolph, Long Branch, Hoffman-Boston, and Oakridge), over 20 percent of families may not be able to utilize the bus to and from school, and therefore may have to commute by car.

I felt compelled to bring these concerns to your awareness as a member of our community who grew up in a paycheck-to-paycheck home. My father was often on the road working to make ends meet, while my mother held down the fort at home, essentially operating as a single parent who also worked full-time. She took the Metro into DC each day and would not be home until nearly 6 PM. Thankfully, my elementary school was just a few minutes away, so being able to pick me up in time was possible. I can't help but wonder the hardship and stress she would have endured, had I been forced to attend a public school well across the county.

Finally, I want to point out that it feels even more inequitable that the families who are highly likely to be impacted by this proposal are none the wiser due to lack of information from the county. As shared in a meeting with Mary Kadera and Reid Goldstein, the prioritized schools for renovation will not be determined until September - the same month as when the public comment period ends. Should these families have no voice in the matter?

For the reasons laid out above, I urge you to consider the hardships so many families would face should centrality of the swing space location not be taken into far greater consideration.

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SB

I am a parent at Nottingham Elementary School and I have major concerns regarding the potential repurposing of Nottingham for a swing space. Obviously it is a huge disruption to all current Nottingham families and students on numerous levels.

I could go on and list the arguments as to why this doesn't make sense and feels like a rush to judgment on this matter.

However, I would like to take this time to highlight one of my biggest concerns. As a parent and as a neighbor in walking distance I'm extremely concerned regarding the traffic and prior traffic-related fatalities we've had recently. Our neighborhood and community were rocked by these and we were happy to see the county take positive steps to increase safety (more stop signs, an awareness campaign and increased visibility for crosswalks). To now see it being suggested to bus and drive in hundreds of children is shocking to me. Our school is 80% walkers and only requires 2 buses.

My son just finished [redacted] at Nottingham. When given a project to draw a picture about what he would do if he were "king for a day" my then [redacted] drew this picture of a pedestrian and wrote that if he were king for a day he would make sure no one would get run over. I was floored by this. I'm attaching the image of what he drew and wrote. Please consider not only the safety implications of this but how much this community has recently gone through and the renewed safety concerns this would bring.

I sincerely hope this suggested repurposing is reconsidered.

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SB

Dear Arlington County School Board, Superintendent, Engagement team

Do not close Nottingham Elementary school to neighborhood students! Do not make it into swing space with increased car and bus traffic! Leave it as a walkable neighborhood school that is currently ranked 30th out of 1107 schools in VA!

I want you to firmly understand that I want Nottingham elementary school which is a neighborhood elementary school that has been a cornerstone of this community for the past 60 plus years to remain as it is.

Not only have my children gone there, but now my grandchildren go there. Walkable elementary schools are a critical component of a neighborhood. Nottingham Elementary school is currently ranked 30th out of 1107 elementary schools in the state of VA and should remain as it, is a pillar of the community.

I do not want to have the bus and car traffic that a swing school would create. We have no main roads here and there are only neighborhood streets. In the recent past we have had three traffic-related fatalities in front of the school. Increased car and bus traffic that a swing school would require will create traffic problems and push unnecessary traffic into the neighborhood streets. How many more fatalities will this unnecessary action create? Not one more is acceptable to me.

Why would you possibly want to take a school that is ranked 30th of 1107 and close it?

Why would you possibly want to close a school where 82% of the students can walk to it?

Why would you possibly think it's a good idea to increase bus and car traffic to make a school buried in the middle of a residential neighborhood into swing space?

I strongly urge you to leave Nottingham Elementary school just as it is.

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SB

My name is [redacted]. I spoke at the School Board meeting on July 18th. As I said then, thank you for allowing us to come speak. I also mentioned that I felt bad about the dynamic of having to just talk at you all, as opposed to having a conversation, but such is the forum.

I am an Arlington resident, and a father of [redacted], one starting at Nottingham's Kindergarten in the fall (2023-2024 school year), and our youngest starting there for the 2025-2026 school year. I'm certainly opposed to Nottingham being turned into swing space in the future, and have several issues with the Pre-CIP proposal. Apologies for the length of this email, but I'd appreciate it if you could please take the time here:

1. I think at a baseline, the numbers and projections of enrollment are just off and wrong. While anecdotal evidence is not sufficient to change the course of a proposal like this, my anecdotal experience of seeing more families move into the area with small children that will be attending Nottingham is actually supporting the facts. Nottingham THIS 2023-2024 year has had to hire a 3rd kindergarten teacher and open a new third kindergarten class. The extended day applications have a waitlist as well since so many new and additional children THIS year applied. Those children are increasing the population of the school going forward. Also, my family, and numerous others, have younger siblings coming right behind them, so the increase is not temporary.

2. A traffic study NEEDS to be done. I noted that in the Pre-CIP report, a drawback to the alternative of building a new elementary school next to an existing school meant that that site would have "twice the traffic". Nottingham is 82% walkable and only has two buses that come through. Our physical neighborhood will have an incredible increase in traffic (much more than twice the rate) if Nottingham is turned into swing space and becomes a commuter school going through this residential neighborhood. The notion that Nottingham students can walk to other local schools like Tuckahoe or Discovery if it's turned into swing space, doesn't make sense from a safety perspective. Currently, all these walkers feel safe and can do so because it is a neighborhood school that does not have commuters and buses going through it. Walking to Discovery or Tuckahoe will not be feasible with the tremendous increase in buses and cars and traffic.

I note that under the analysis in Appendix F, the "traffic and road safety issues, safe pedestrian approaches" section for repurposing Nottingham was "TBD - To Be Determined". With all due respect, it is not fair, kind, or logical, to move forward with a vote on repurposing Nottingham as a swing space with this major factor as a "TBD". I don't wish upon anyone that decisions are made while "traffic and road safety issues" as well as safe pedestrian and cycling approaches" are still up in the air and yet to be studied or looked at.

Also, there are still MANY "TBD"s. There are not 85-100 parking spaces at Nottingham, nor the space for on street parking. Come to the school and see. There will not be enough space for the amount of buses to come through. Come to Nottingham and see.

Also, I do not see Appendix I, that refers to the full transportation study that was done for the Immersion Relocation program. It's not incredibly important, but what it demonstrates is that the Board certainly does transportation studies, and just has not in this case.

3. I know of numerous other families that live in Arlington, but who do not even have children in Nottingham, that are opposed to this. For some of those families, this proposal impacts them, in terms of increased traffic and safety that spills out from the massive impact of commuting a new school's worth of children in, and disbursing the existing neighborhood's children (Nottingham). They also oppose this proposal out of a fairness factor to all the students. The students from the renovation school will be on buses of commuting at least an hour a day potentially.

I have several other issues and points to raise, but I believe many of my other friends and folks that are coordinating with you all are making them as well, and we are trying to be streamlined and respectful, while still being forceful and heard. Okay, if you've made it this far, I appreciate you. I'll ask you to respond to my email with the word "broccoli" in the email as a fun test :)

I do not have a specific solution to put forward at this time, although I believe I have good ideas for solutions. However, I do ask that you not vote to approve Nottingham as swing space for 2026-2027 at this time, as there is still time to address these deficiencies in the plan and study more. Let us help as well. We were told about this only weeks ago and told that while it's just a proposal, it seems pretty concrete and going to a vote very soon, for something that is still many years off. Please vote NO on making Nottingham swing space right now, and let's work to continue to see how to make the renovations work in a way that works for everyone.

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SB

Dear Aliana,

I appreciate your response last week to my email about the pre-CIP plan. It does raise various other questions that I'd like to put forth:

1. You say that APS is working diligently to mitigate potential challenges that will result from repurposing Nottingham. What, specifically, are you doing? How are you planning to retain teachers at Nottingham until 2026? What are your plans for extended day, which is already overcrowded at Nottingham with fewer students than will be using Nottingham as a swing space. What is the plan for extended day at Tuckahoe and Discovery, which is already over capacity? Where in any of APS's reports



of considerations does it discuss this impact on Nottingham families. Other impacts to other school communities are discussed as opportunity costs, but I did not see any discussion of what it means to disband our community and to send the majority of Nottingham students to schools where they will no longer be in the walk zone.

2. You say that spreading students among many schools is disruptive for the receiving schools. How do you know that? Where did you study that? Who did you talk to about that? Did you also consider the potential benefits to the receiving schools, such as opportunities to bring communities together, improve diversity, and foster cooperation between schools? If not, why is this not a factor?

3. Have you asked the schools that are most likely to receive renovations whether they would rather be split up closer to home, or rather they would rather stay together but be bussed up to 30 minutes each way to a non-central school like Nottingham? If not, why not? When will APS consider the voices of the schools that are candidates for renovation?

4. Are you sure you will need swing space in 2026? How do you know? What if APS/the Board decide to prioritize smaller scale renovations first? Why let Nottingham sit empty in that scenario? Why not wait until you know specifically what the need is before offering a solution?

5. You say that only a limited number of schools have capacity to accept students, and “there’s no guarantee they will be nearby” the renovating school. But neither is Nottingham! In fact, it is potentially as far away from the schools being renovated as any school could be.

6. Why is it not preferable to distribute students to Nottingham, Tuckahoe, and Discovery? That way, three school share the burden of extra capacity, busses, and traffic, rather than giving that entire burden to Nottingham.

7. Speaking of, why was no traffic study commissioned? How does APS know, measure, and appropriately consider the effect this plan will have on traffic and pedestrian safety?

8. You say that transporting and distributing staff every couple of years would be complex. Why? What specifically makes it complex? Where in its report did APS analyze the complexities presented by this scenario?

9. You say that walkability was a factor in selecting Nottingham, but under your plan, current 82% of Nottingham students can walk to school, and less than 30% will be able to do so under the new plan. How do those numbers help support the selection of Nottingham?

10. Will the students that you consider to still be walkable to Tuckahoe and Discovery have to cross major intersections and streets? Which ones? What is the plan for protecting our students who walk to schools?

11. What is APS’s plan for securing more busses and bus drivers? How many new busses will this plan require, both to Tuckahoe/Discovery and from the renovating schools to Nottingham?

This proposal seems really short-sighted and concocted without the necessary data to back it up. The Nottingham community has spent decades fostering a close-knit, walkable community and we would really appreciate additional answers to the many outstanding questions at hand.

SB

I am writing this to you about APS's plan to close down Nottingham and repurpose it as a swing space. We just moved to Arlington last year and are extremely disappointed to find out APS's plan to shut down a thriving neighborhood school which we love and are deeply connected to.

We have below questions about this process:

1. As per the Pre-CIP report, there are no schools identified that will require renovations. The size of the renovations or the length of the renovations are not identified yet. The vote for the renovations is scheduled in Oct 2023. How has APS reached a conclusion that a swing space is needed without knowing details of these renovations? Why is the vote for swing space scheduled before the renovation needs are even identified? Why are parents from those schools have no voice in this decision process?
2. What is APS's plan to retain teachers/staff to keep Nottingham school open and functional till the last day without affecting kids' education needs? How is the vote to shutdown Nottingham school scheduled without a thorough plan to guarantee no impact on kids' education?
3. Shutting down neighborhood school which is at the heart of the community should never be an option on the table. Where is the data to show that APS has considered other unoccupied buildings as a swing space? For example, What about using MPSA as a temporary swing space since that building is going to be demolished?
4. This plan is going to put Tuckahoe and Discovery schools at near/over capacity. Why do parents from those schools not have any voice in this decision process?
5. Walkability is a huge factor in reducing environmental impact. Is Arlington not committed to promoting environmental and health benefits? If so, why is APS considering shutting down Nottingham which is the 2nd most walkable school in Arlington and force students/parents to drive or take buses instead?

I trust that APS has the best interests of the kids and communities and would make the right decision to support schools needing renovations without shutting down any neighborhood schools and breaking up communities.

Thank you in advance for your time in answering these questions.

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SB

I have significant concerns about the selection of Nottingham Elementary as a swing space in the Pre-Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Report – not only as a mom of a rising Nottingham [redacted] student, but also as a county resident who cares about the well-being of children throughout Arlington. I believe that the School Board and Arlington residents need additional information before concluding that turning Nottingham into a swing space is the right choice for our community.

One of my top concerns is stability for Arlington families. During the worst of COVID, I was lucky in that my children were young – [redacted]. I know many families were not so lucky, and they had to adjust to the difficulties of remote school. This upheaval of schooling, while a necessary public health measure at

the time, has left a lasting impact on children that we are just beginning to understand. Especially in the shadow of COVID-19, I think we need stability for children in schools across Arlington.

While Nottingham families are aware of this proposed school closure, there are many other neighboring schools that will be impacted that are still unaware of the possible change. This includes families with children at Discovery, Tuckahoe, and Cardinal. Tuckahoe would move to 113% capacity with some students moving to trailers and nearly 100 Discovery students would then be displaced and move to Taylor Elementary.

In addition, the schools to be renovated have not yet been identified. None of these families have had a chance to weigh in on this proposal yet. How far away are these schools? What do these families think about their children being driven or bused to Nottingham?

I am sure there is no perfect answer. I believe one alternative could be to set up trailers at the schools being renovated, so children can stay close to their homes. Another alternative could be to distribute the children from the renovated school among other nearby schools while renovations are being done. A third alternative could be to select a more central, non-school building – keeping children closer to their homes and disrupting as few families as possible.

While stability for young children is my top concern, I know that there are many other factors that the School Board needs to think about, including budget, pedestrian safety, traffic density, transportation issues, and more. While closing a small school may appear to be less disruptive to fewer students, in reality, many more families are impacted than just the students at Nottingham. I encourage the School Board to look at all possible options before closing an entire school, displacing more than 400 children, and impacting hundreds of more Arlington families who have not yet had a chance to weigh in on this potential disruption to their children's lives.

Thank you for your consideration

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Engage Ticket Number 3939

Good afternoon,

I'm writing to request more information on the FY 2025-34 CIP proposal to repurpose Nottingham Elementary into a swing space.

Our family has lived right around the corner from the school for three years and moved to the neighborhood in large part because of the close proximity to Nottingham. We have been so looking forward to sending our now toddler-age children to Nottingham and would be sincerely crushed to see them reassigned to another Arlington school when they become school-age in a few short years.

Repurposing Nottingham would drastically impact our educational plans for our children and would drive us to even consider moving to a more stable school district outside of the Arlington area if the motion passes.

Please let me know where to learn more about the proposal, how to influence the School Board's vote, and any other information that might be relevant to the decision making process.

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3951

Good morning -

In the pre-CIP report, I see the recommendation to repurpose the existing ACC building for the Montessori Public School, and to then deconstruct the Henry Building and replace it with green space. Did the planners give any consideration to using the Henry Building as the needed "swing space" instead of NES? The Henry Building is more centrally located, and this option would be much less disruptive to students currently enrolled in Nottingham and the adjacent districts. Once the various construction projects are completed, the Henry Building could then be converted into the needed green space.

Thank you in advance for your response,

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3979

Hello, thank you for providing the pre-CIP report and working session presentation online. I have read through the report and have two questions that are not addressed in the report or the presentation:

(1) The report states that 90 Discovery children could be re-assigned to Taylor during the boundary changes. Assuming Taylor is one of the first schools to be renovated given its HVAC and physical plant needs, then those 90 children could attend three schools over three years which seems incredibly disruptive. For example, they would have 2025-26 at Discovery, reassigned to Taylor, Taylor uses Nottingham in 2026-27 as swing space so the kids are at Nottingham, Taylor returns to Taylor campus in 2027-28 once renovated and then the kids are at Taylor in 2027-28. That seems pretty unreasonable for young children to have to attend school at three different schools over such a short time. Is there a way to minimize the disruptives for those 90 children who are reassigned from Discovery to Taylor? Perhaps wait on those reassignments until after the Taylor renovation?

(2) How will the increased need for Extended Day slots be handled at Discovery and Tuckahoe? If Discovery takes in 240 Nottingham kids and Tuckahoe takes in over 100, many of those families will need Extended Day. Will the receiving schools' Extended Day programs be expanded so that current Extended Day families at those schools do not lose the coverage they need, and Nottingham families who need Extended Day can access it? This is a huge potential issue that needs to be addressed - families with two working parents absolutely depend on Extended Day and cannot work without it.

Thanks

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3981

Support for needed use for Nottingham

I'm supportive of whatever the school system needs in reallocating space. We live near Nottingham and I know there are strong voices against using the space for transitions/swing space but I support whatever is needed based upon appropriate research undertaken.

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4064

Dear APS,

As parents to a [redacted] at Nottingham Elementary and members of our local community, we want to express that we are unhappy about the proposal to repurpose Nottingham Elementary School as swing space.

Nottingham Elementary is a wonderful school with an amazing community of staff & faculty, parents, and students. If Nottingham were to become a swing space, it would be disruptive to our community and the continuation of our children's schooling in familiar surroundings.

We just bought a home this summer to settle down long term, within walking distance to Nottingham Elementary so our daughter can continue attending the same school. We've unfortunately had to move around since she was of school age making Nottingham her 3rd school since pre-K. And we'd like to avoid putting her in yet another school by 2026.

We'd like to encourage you to block this proposal and keep the Nottingham Elementary School and community intact!

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4182

Good evening,

I'm a current parent at Nottingham Elementary School. I was shocked and outraged to learn of the proposal to turn Nottingham into a swing school. My son has just completed [redacted]. We moved during the school year and our new house is on the border and zoned for Discovery. I felt so strongly about my son remaining at Nottingham (for a plethora of reasons including [redacted] and a number of previous transitions), I petitioned for him to remain at Nottingham for the duration of elementary school. I received word that the petition had been approved just a few months ago. In addition to my personal feelings and the concern for the impact on my son and our family, I have general concerns and questions about the proposal.

My son is a walker, as are many other Nottingham students. It's a wonderful, tight-knit community that would be broken apart by forcing our walkers to bus to neighboring schools. Our neighborhood has recently dealt with accidents and safety concerns regarding pedestrians, which resulted in new stop signs and updates to the crosswalks. I fear that bringing in more buses and people will just bring back the dangers we've just worked as a community to address.

I don't understand why a community center or another type of facility could not be repurposed for this use. Why would the best option be to break up a long standing elementary school and disrupt so many students and parents? Or why would it not be considered to place the children whose schools are under construction temporarily at other schools? I'm not sure why our students are the ones that have to suffer here. This is extremely disruptive for students and families.

I've been in communication with many parents from both Nottingham and Discovery about these proposed changes. We are all working together to determine the best ways to raise our concerns and fight this proposal. I really hope that the school board listens to the neighbors and parents who feel so strongly about this.

Thank you

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4224

Dear School Board, Dr. Durán, and staff:

I am writing today about the proposed vote of Nottingham Elementary becoming a "swing space" for other elementary schools while their facilities are renovated. If this resolution is passed, I, as a Discovery Parent will welcome all of the new students who are moved here. We are an underpopulated school and should shoulder some of the impact, particularly since many schools in our community have been at or over capacity for years.

I do not envy the decision that you have to make.

However, I am one of many voices of my son's former school, Escuela Key who dissented against their move a few years ago (more on that later.) I do have several concerns for the families from South Arlington whose children and families may join our community that reflect my advocacy back then:

- I am starting to hear the same echos of those who happily saw Key kids depart a few years ago... in my own neighborhood. The fear of "property values going down" as poor Brown children inhabit their neighborhood school during the day. I'm particularly fearful of those resource-poor children and families who know they will not be welcome into our neighborhood by a lot of families inhabiting it. Just know that the sentiment is there, and please ignore all of this noise as you deliberate this proposal.
- I'm assuming that you know what schools may be relocated to this space? I'm assuming MPSA and then Hoffman-Boston or Randolph... Barcroft? When will you let these families/communities know? Will they be happy to relocate across town for one year?
- While I was at Escuela Key, during the school moves debate, I articulated transportation challenges that those without time (or a car) will face moving to a new school:
  - For marginalized families, while their children will be bussed to schools, their parents will use public transportation (primarily buses since the Metro is expensive) to access their new school during the day to pick up sick children, attend PT conferences, meet with school-based admin staff, PTA meetings, etc. There is only one bus line that runs on Williamsburg Blvd, dropping close-ish to Nottingham. I took the liberty to use WMATA to map out how one would get to North-North Arlington from South Arlington. For MPSA, the commute takes 51 minutes one way with one transfer. Hoffman-Boston, 77 minutes with one transfer, but lots of walking.
    - [MPSA to Nottingham](#)

- [Hoffman-Boston to Nottingham](#)
  - These commutes and costs are unreasonable for resource-poor, multi-marginalized families who often ride with young children. At the very least, will APS work with Arlington County to bring more frequent cross-county bus service to Nottingham during the day?
- Other transportation concerns:
  - All cross county school buses are ALWAYS late. (Ask me how I know as a former option school parent!!!) Will FARM kids have enough time to eat breakfast before class?
  - Also, for two years, my son attended a private school in Potomac, MD. I happily dropped my kid off at his cluster bus stop for the 90 minute commute to school (in total per day). He never complained; however, my engagement with the school was affected. As a privileged person, I didn't have to worry about public transportation per se, but going to a school a school 30 minutes away (in good traffic, non-rush hour) did affect how/when I attended events. I never attended evening events (e.g., science night, in-person PTA meetings, parent mixers...) because we would come home too late; and even thought twice about parent-teacher conferences... spending an hour commuting on the road just for a 20 minute meeting. Which I did anyway, but grumbled every time. I would actually have to take days off of work to attend events when school was in session. APS families that will have to attend events cross-county and lacking metro access may see the same effects in engagement.

Other thoughts:

- This isn't a concern for MPSA, as their enrollment is capped; but for other neighborhood schools, what will happen to families who enroll mid-year? Will they be expected to attend school cross-county too?
- What will happen to the staff at Nottingham? Will they be absorbed in other schools until the space becomes a neighborhood school again?
- For disABLED students, many if not most struggle immensely with transitions and change. Will there be additional supports for them as they change not only buildings (...and rooms... and hallways... and temperature(!)), but possibly new teachers and staff too? And then they will have to change back the following school year...

Finally, after Escuela Key transitioned to their new building, while we had left by then, I heard secondhand musings over the years that the community and culture has inexplicably changed. (Some of it may be due to the pandemic too, but with both circumstances happening at the same time, you can't tease them out.) When you make drastic decisions like transitioning a whole community to a new facility in a new neighborhood, please know the intangible impacts that it may have to the population, and particularly the children.

Thank you for reading. I apologize for the length and disjointedness of my response.

Dear Members of the APS School Board,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Board's 2023 Pre-Capital Improvement Plan Report (Pre-CIP Report). As the parent of a future Nottingham Elementary School (Nottingham) student and an Arlington Public School (APS) community member, I have several concerns about the proposal to turn Nottingham into a swing space. I believe additional studies and data are needed as well as alternative solutions should be considered before this proposal moves forward.

First, the Pre-CIP Report does not appropriately consider or explore the safety and traffic impacts of the proposal. The immediate area surrounding Nottingham is notorious for multiple pedestrian fatalities in the past 8 years, including a mother who was killed putting her child in her car which there is now an annual memorial 5k walk in her memory. The county recently put in additional stop signs near Nottingham, but there has been no opportunity for a follow-up traffic, pedestrian, and walkability studies as to whether this has made a significant difference in safety to current pedestrians, including elementary school children. Additionally, the roads near Nottingham, such as N Ohio Street, are too narrow for an influx of buses and additional car traffic twice per day. Due to parked cars on both sides of the road, most vehicles, but especially large delivery and work vehicles, already cross the double yellow line on N Ohio Street on a consistent basis due to the limited space in the lanes. Further, the Nottingham neighborhood is highly pedestrian and the overwhelming majority of current Nottingham students walk to school currently. On a daily basis, a regular caravan of students and parents walk past our house excited to go to school. I would like to invite you to come sit on our porch and watch all the kids and parents happily walk to Nottingham Elementary in the morning or watch them all excitedly walk home talking about their day. This would end if Nottingham is converted into a swing space as all of these children and parents walking to school would now be forced to drive to school resulting in less exercise for all, less sense of community, decreased mental health for adults and children, and less quality of life.

Additional traffic studies for vehicles and pedestrians, as well as a walkability study, are needed to determine the impact on the Nottingham neighborhood's safety and traffic patterns. If a traffic study camera was placed at the intersection of N Ohio Street and 28th St N facing South towards Langston Blvd, this camera would capture constant cars, delivery trucks, school busses, and work trucks with their wheels either on or over the double yellow line and in the oncoming lane of traffic. Furthermore, most of the cross streets, especially the streets with numbers, do NOT have all-way stop signs at the major intersections on N Ohio St, John Marshall Dr, N Lexington St, N Harrison St, etc. Drivers not familiar with our neighborhood will likely anticipate an all-way stop which may cause an increase in traffic accidents and pedestrian accidents and fatalities. This is one example as to why a thorough traffic study of all major thoroughfares needs to occur.

Second, the Pre-CIP Report does not appropriately define the problem it is trying to solve. The Pre-CIP Report does not include a proposed list of schools to be renovated, an estimated timeline for such renovations, estimates of how many students will need to be moved to the swing space, or other similar details. Without this information, it is impossible to judge whether (1) a permanent or semi-permanent swing space is needed at all, or (2) if a swing space is needed, whether Nottingham is the right choice. For example, Nottingham may not be centrally located to the schools that are being temporarily closed.



Or Nottingham may not have the capacity to handle all the temporarily displaced students. Without additional information or supporting data, the choice to close Nottingham Elementary School seems to be arbitrary and capricious at best.

Third, the Pre-CIP Report does not contain sufficient data or study on enrollment trends. The Pre-CIP Report does acknowledge that initiatives such as Missing Middle and the Langston Blvd Development Project may result in increased enrollment, but it does not meaningfully address or engage with these issues. The county has already seen dozens of Missing Middle-related applications in the short time the initiative has been approved, and more time and research are needed to assess the impact on enrollment for Nottingham and other nearby schools. It is shortsighted to close a thriving neighborhood school and cause nearby schools to be pushed to or past capacity, only to discover Nottingham needs to be reopened a few years from now if and when enrollment trends are likely to change due to these initiatives.

Fourth, parents at other affected schools, including Discovery, Tuckahoe, and the schools undergoing planned renovations, must be specifically informed of this plan with details on how to provide public comment and feedback so that their input on how this proposal will affect their communities and children can be considered. For example, because Nottingham is not centrally located to many APS schools, students at schools being temporarily renovated may need to be bussed for longer periods and/or parents may need to account for much longer drop off and pick up times, requiring those parents to have significant disruption in their daily lives which could also impact their careers and quality of life. Since full information is not included in the Pre-CIP Report regarding the potential schools to be renovated, these parents have no idea that they may be substantially affected by the proposal.

Finally, I would like to offer one possible alternative solution that the APS Board should consider in lieu of permanently closing any school: temporarily moving students whose schools are getting renovated to nearby schools with capacity. This solution would mean that students that are already being displaced will only be temporarily split up instead of permanently displacing hundreds of other students at Nottingham, Discovery, and Tuckahoe. This would also leave open the possibility that displaced students could be accommodated at schools located closer to them, meaning less travel time and disruption to their daily lives. Moreover, the burden of the displaced students would be then split amongst several communities, lessening the negative impacts to any one community.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

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4261

Dear Ms. Stengle,

I hope this email finds you well. I am contacting you on behalf of the Nottingham PTA executive committee, and at the suggestion of board member Reid Goldstein. As you might imagine, the Nottingham community has a number of questions and concerns regarding APS's recommendation to re-purpose Nottingham as a swing space in 2026. We have been meeting with board members to discuss these concerns, but we would also like to schedule a small group meeting with you and your staff, to start to talk about some of these questions and hopefully get some answers that we can take back to our community. We understand that there is a community discussion that is scheduled for September 11,

however we are concerned that whatever we may learn in that meeting, we will only have four days after the meeting to address any necessary follow-up. That's why we're coming to you and asking to meet with you in a small group setting as soon as possible.

Can you please let us know whether you and your staff are available to meet, and if so, when?

Many thanks, and we look forward to it.

1. Can you please explain how the proposal to repurpose Nottingham will factor into the planned redrawing of elementary school boundary lines, which is also proposed to go into effect in Fall 2026? The pre-CIP indicates the number of Nottingham students that will be reassigned to Tuckahoe and Discovery, but as I understand, some of those students may also be affected by the boundary process? What is the goal of the boundary process, especially considering that by taking Nottingham offline, Zone 1 will lose significant available capacity?

2. A traffic study was commissioned in conjunction with APS's proposal to move the immersion program. Why was no study conducted with respect to the swing space recommendation? How many busses does APS anticipate will be necessary at Nottingham? What is the route those buses will travel? How many additional cars does APS project will be dropping off/picking up at school? How will that affect traffic and pedestrian safety around Nottingham?

3. Why is the impact to the Nottingham community and its teachers never mentioned as an "opportunity cost" in APS's analysis? It is for other options under consideration.

4. Should this plan go into effect, what is APS's plan to retain teachers at Nottingham until 2026?

5. How do your capacity projections account for the outlier years of covid, considering that they are based on a three year rolling average including 2020 and 2021?

6. What is APS's plan for extended day? There is already a waitlist at Tuckahoe and Discovery, and under this plan, there will be substantially more kids needing after care. What is the plan for Nottingham? Nottingham also currently has a waitlist, with far fewer kids than the schools will be sending during renovations, and presumably more kids will need extended day at Nottingham when they cannot walk home. How is APS planning to address this need?

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4261

Thanks Lisa, please let us know when you would like to meet. We are eager to do so. In the meantime, we have some main categories of questions, with many more to follow:

1. Can you please explain how the proposal to repurpose Nottingham will factor into the planned redrawing of elementary school boundary lines, which is also proposed to go into effect in Fall 2026? The pre-CIP indicates the number of Nottingham students that will be reassigned to Tuckahoe and Discovery, but as I understand, some of those students may also be affected by the boundary process? What is the goal of the boundary process, especially considering that by taking Nottingham offline, Zone 1 will lose significant available capacity?

2. A traffic study was commissioned in conjunction with APS's proposal to move the immersion program. Why was no study conducted with respect to the sing space recommendation? How many busses does APS anticipate will be necessary at Nottingham? What is the route those buses will travel? How many additional cars does APS project will be dripping off/picking up at school? How will that affect traffic and pedestrian safety around Nottingham?
3. Why is the impact to the Nottingham community and its teachers never mentioned as an "opportunity cost" in APS's analysis? It is for other options under consideration.
4. Should this plan go into effect, what is APS's plan to retain teachers at Nottingham until 2026?
5. How do your capacity projection account for the outlier years of covid, considering that they are based on a three year rolling average including 2020 and 2021.
6. What is APS's plan for extended day? There is already a waitlist at Tuckahoe and Discovery, and under this plan, there will be substantially more kids needing after care. What is the plan for Nottingham? Nottingham also currently has a waitlist, with far fewer kids than the schools will be sending during renovations, and presumably more kids will need extended day at Nottingham when they cannot walk home. How is APS planning to address this need?

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4297

Reid and Mary,

Thank you both, again, for meeting with the Nottingham PTA over the past few weeks to begin to discuss our concerns about the proposal to repurpose Nottingham Elementary. We very much appreciate the constructive dialogue, and we look forward to continued discussion in the future. (I am also copying your fellow Board members on this email so they can get the benefit of our thinking, and we very much hope to meet with all of you in the near future, too!)

I write today to discuss a very frustrating issue that we are beginning to experience with the Administration's so-called "engagement" with the community. Several parents have independently reached out to APS to express their concerns about the pre-CIP and to ask vital questions about APS's proposal (which the pre-CIP fails to answer). Unfortunately, these parents are getting back form responses from APS that talk past the serious questions that are being raised, and which have the effect of gaslighting these concerned community members rather than engaging in any serious dialog. (For a paraphrased example, parent asks "why does the report say X," and APS writes back, "rest assured, we looked at this, and encourage you to read our report to learn more.")

Reid – when we spoke earlier this week, you encouraged us not to engage in a form letter writing campaign with APS. We have not done so, and have no plans to do so, because we agree with you that that an open, honest, and two-way dialog is the only way that we are going to come together to solve these challenging problems. So you can imagine how frustrating it is for us to see APS using this very strategy to seemingly dismiss legitimate community concerns. Their "open" and "transparent" process, which attempts to stifle serious discussion with stock language that circularly refers questioners back to a report that fails to provide any answers is absolutely infuriating!

We have plans to meet with Lisa Stengle and Dr. Duran in August, and we will certainly raise our concerns with them then. But in the meantime, we would be extremely grateful if you could please encourage APS to get away from their half-baked talking points and actually engage with a community that is desperate for answers. They think that they're going to run out the clock by sending us a bunch of corporate double-speak, but their refusal to actually deal with the substance of our questions is only causing us to dig in and fight harder.

We believe APS owes the entire Arlington community more information than what we're getting, and we would appreciate anything you can do to help us move the ball forward in a constructive and communicative way, especially since we're running out of time between now and September 15. (I would send this plea directly to APS, but we all know what kind of response I would get back...)

Thank you very much

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4337

I empathize with the problem facing you and the school board. Fundamentally, Arlington is growing faster than its school capacity. New schools have been deemed prohibitively expensive, so renovations to existing schools are required. What to do with the students temporarily displaced by the renovation?

The pre-CIP document proposes transforming a neighborhood school into "swing-school". Admirably, the document considers how to choose the unfortunate neighborhood school by minimizing the number of students affected. Nottingham Elementary, the school of my two children, was selected.

However, I believe that an alternative was not given enough consideration. I argue that **Option #5**, "**Temporary Student Redistribution at existing Elementary Schools**", is the preferred solution for three reasons:

- **Flexibility** - Option #5 uses the actual needs and capacities of schools instead of forecasts. This will be a boon to future School Board planners.
- **Traffic Safety** - Option #5 distributes buses across the county. No particular community is overburdened by a spike in traffic.
- **Fairness** - Option #5 is more fair. I would rather my child be displaced by community renovation than by community destruction.

These three reasons are discussed in more detail below.

### **Flexibility - Cloudy Forecasts**

"It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future." -Yogi Berra

The swing-school solution is based on forecasts of enrollments at schools across Arlington. Additional trailers will be built around the relatively small swing-school to house all of the extra students from the relatively large school undergoing renovation. Students from the swing school will be displaced to schools in adjacent boundaries.

What happens if the 3-year forecasts of enrollments are off (as they often are), both at the swing-school's former boundary and at the renovated school? This will cause a second cascade of boundary changes 3 years from now. What happens if the 6-year forecasts of enrollment are off for the next school to be renovated (almost a certainty)? I foresee yet more boundary changes and disgruntled Arlingtonians.

Option #5's flexibility avoids these problems. When renovations begin on the first school to be renovated, we will know the actual attendance of that school and the actual excess capacities of schools across the county. We will be able to accurately distribute kids from the school under renovation to the nearest schools with excess capacity (instead of busing them all to a single, distant swing-school). Finally, once the first school has been renovated, its excess capacity can then be used to redistribute students from subsequent renovations.

*The temporary-redistribution solution (option 5) uses the actual needs and capacities of schools instead of forecasts. This will be a boon to future School Board planners.*

### **Traffic Safety - A Priority**

Over 80% of Nottingham students walk to school. This majority walking population will be replaced by an even larger population, all bused or driven in cars. This will add significantly to the traffic burden of the neighborhood. Roads near Nottingham have undergone safety upgrades after several pedestrian deaths in recent years. Unfortunately, the increased traffic burden may test the efficacy of these upgrades.

*The temporary-redistribution solution (option 5) distributes buses across the county. No particular community is overburdened by a spike in traffic.*

### **Fairness - A Thought Experiment**

I asked my wife, which would you rather have:

- Option A: Nottingham is turned into a swing school. In two years, our community that we love is destroyed and our children are permanently shifted to more distant schools.
- Option B: The temporary-redistribution solution is adopted, and Nottingham is selected as the first school to undergo renovation (not realistic, but this is just a thought experiment). Our children are bused for two years to a distant Arlington school with only a subset of their friends.

Which of these options seems more fair to you? Which would you rather experience?

My wife and I agreed that we would be sad with option B, but option B also felt more understandable and fair than option A. When we speak with parents from other schools, the refrain is always that they feel so "sorry" and "bad" for us Nottingham parents. But if our school were to be renovated, I think most parents from other schools wouldn't feel bad for us. True, it is a disruption to have kids change their schools temporarily, but ultimately a school renovation is an understandable reason for such a disruption.

*The temporary-redistribution solution (option 5) is more fair. I would rather my child be displaced by community renovation than by community destruction.*

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4407

I was shocked to learn that consideration is being given to closing a high performing and functioning elementary school for the purposes of providing “swing” space for other county schools to use. Are there approved plans and budgets for these school renovations? What prevents those schools from leveraging the same means used by Nottingham when it was renovated last decade? Trailers were said to not impact the quality of education of those students at that time....was that untrue? Why can't this same method which was previously said to not impact student education be utilized for future renovations at other schools?

Has a traffic study been done to determine the impacts to bringing addition car and bus traffic to the Nottingham neighborhood? Residents have been killed in horrendous car accidents near Nottingham in the last few years even when a large percentage of students do not require cars or bussing to get to school. This is a walking community and this plan will lower the quality of life for residents near Nottingham elementary, as well as create serious traffic congestion and risk to residents.

Why is Nottingham neighborhood taking the burden of the entire county's renovation needs? Would the Nottingham swing space only be used for students of other elementary school renovations? Or would it be used for middle or high school students as well? Is the school equipped for that? This seems to be trying to solve an imaginary problem that does not exist. Renovations have been ongoing for schools for years in Arlington and this has not been a problem before. How many elementary school renovations have been planned and approved for 2027 and beyond? How can we be making decisions to close high functioning schools for school renovations that may or may not even materialize?

There are many questions and many problems with this ill thought through plan. Has a decision already been made on this? Have you even gathered the thoughts and opinions of those impacted the most by this plan???

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4416

Dear Members of the School Board:

As I continue to aim for thoughtful reflection on the pre-CIP, I continue to have grave concerns on the implications it poses, should the direction of it be approved in the October vote.

As you know, in the past several years, our community has had three traffic fatalities on Little Falls Road - two immediately in front of the school and another two blocks down. None of these fatalities occurred during the dark hours of the night. One was a mom of a Nottingham student who was volunteering at the school, and was hit by a dump truck when buckling her younger child in the car - parked right in front of the school. Another was a woman crossing at John Marshall and Little Falls in the bright morning sun around 9 AM.

I wonder - has the county considered how several buses coming into the neighborhood might interact with those who drive to school?

Has the county considered how the students in the extended walk zone to Discovery might be impacted by having to cross at Little Falls with a significant increase in cars and buses?

Has the county considered that I won't even cross at Little Falls with my children to go to the park across the street, because our community has been so deeply impacted by these pedestrian fatalities and it causes intense anxiety for my kids to cross there?

Has the county considered that the aforementioned may not be monetary costs, but should certainly be considered as non-monetary costs?

Has the county considered the price and impact to the community should a child crossing be killed by increased traffic in the neighborhood?

Currently, the county's response to these serious questions is that a traffic study will be done following approval of the pre-CIP proposal. Does this strike the School Board as backwards, given that approval indicates that additional planning will all focus on using Nottingham as a swing space, with no genuine consideration to other spaces?

These are the questions that continue to keep me up at night, as I think about the implications of the plan the county has proposed. I hope the School Board will take these concerns seriously and reflect on how they would think about this proposal, if it were to be in their own neighborhood.

Thank you

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4429

Hi All,

I know you've received lots of complaints from Nottingham parents and students about the planned changes to Nottingham elementary school. I just wanted to let you know that I'm a parent of 2 Arlington Science Focus students, and even though as far as I can tell my kids will be unaffected by the proposal, I still find it to be a terrible proposal. I attended last night's school board meeting and I've reviewed materials about the proposed change. I think Arlington needs to do a better job of explaining what the renovations will be and why they are needed. I think moving kids out of a school into a different school should be an absolute last resort. Why can't school renovations happen during the summer or why can't trailers be added to existing schools?

I know I'd be very upset if the school board proposed something similar to my kids' school and I understand the frustration of Nottingham parents and I hope the board studies other options.

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4456

Dear Mr. Goldstein,

I hope this note finds you well. As concerned parents and community members, we are writing to express our deep reservations regarding the administration's proposal to convert Nottingham Elementary School into a swing space.

We believe this decision could have significant repercussions on the education and well-being of our students and communities. We request that you **vote down this proposal**, considering the following key points of concern before making and final decisions:

1. **Identify all impacted schools:** It is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of all the schools that will be affected by this proposed change. We urge the county to provide complete data on schools in need of renovation, which is scheduled for release in September. This data is essential to assess whether Nottingham is the most suitable location to serve these communities and to evaluate its potential impact against the four factors outlined in the pre-CIP report: transformation efficiency, utilization, stability, diversity and equity.
2. **Provide opportunity to hear from diverse community voices:** We firmly believe in the importance of hearing from all segments of our community. However, the current timeline leaves a limited window for impacted schools to voice their concerns. Schools on the renovation list will only be identified by the county in September, and the public comment period ends on September 15. We request the School Board to extend the public comment period to ensure all voices are heard and considered in this decision-making process.
3. **Conduct a traffic and transportation study:** the impact of the proposed plan extends beyond the Nottingham community. Other schools absorbing Nottingham students will also experience changes in traffic patterns and transportation needs. We request the county conduct a comprehensive traffic study to assess the potential consequences of transportation and infrastructure safety. This is especially critical given concerns around increasing traffic in a community in which 3 deaths have occurred within two blocks of the school in recent years.
4. **Evaluate capacity and impact of future plans:** It is vital to consider the long-term impact of this proposal on capacity planning for North Arlington elementary schools. Projections indicate that some schools may exceed maximum capacity by 2026 under this plan. Additionally, we urge the county to provide data on how planned missing middle units will further impact school capacities.

We believe that the decisions made by the School Board should prioritize the well-being and academic success of our students, while also taking into account the concerns and input of the communities impacted. We kindly request that you carefully consider the above key points of concern before proceeding with any decisions regarding the proposed swing space plan.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We hope that you will carefully deliberate on these concerns and act in the best interest of our students and communities.

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4489

Dear Mr. Goldstein,

I have significant concerns about the selection of Nottingham Elementary as a swing space in the Pre-Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Report – not only as a mom of a rising Nottingham kindergarten student, but also as a county resident who cares about the well-being of children throughout Arlington. I believe



that the School Board and Arlington residents need additional information before concluding that turning Nottingham into a swing space is the right choice for our community.

One of my top concerns is stability for Arlington families. During the worst of COVID, I was lucky in that my children were young – I was still pregnant with my son and my daughter had continued care in her small in-home daycare. I know many families were not so lucky, and they had to adjust to the difficulties of remote school. This upheaval of schooling, while a necessary public health measure at the time, has left a lasting impact on children that we are just beginning to understand. Especially in the shadow of COVID-19, I think we need stability for children in schools across Arlington.

While Nottingham families are aware of this proposed school closure, there are many other neighboring schools that will be impacted that are still unaware of the possible change. This includes families with children at Discovery, Tuckahoe, and Cardinal. Tuckahoe would move to 113% capacity with some students moving to trailers and nearly 100 Discovery students would then be displaced and move to Taylor Elementary.

In addition, the schools to be renovated have not yet been identified. None of these families have had a chance to weigh in on this proposal yet. How far away are these schools? What do these families think about their children being driven or bused to Nottingham?

I am sure there is no perfect answer. I believe one alternative could be to set up trailers at the schools being renovated, so children can stay close to their homes. Another alternative could be to distribute the children from the renovated school among other nearby schools while renovations are being done. A third alternative could be to select a more central, non-school building – keeping children closer to their homes and disrupting as few families as possible.

While stability for young children is my top concern, I know that there are many other factors that the School Board needs to think about, including budget, pedestrian safety, traffic density, transportation issues, and more. While closing a small school may appear to be less disruptive to fewer students, in reality, many more families are impacted than just the students at Nottingham. I encourage the School Board to look at all possible options before closing an entire school, displacing more than 400 children, and impacting hundreds of more Arlington families who have not yet had a chance to weigh in on this potential disruption to their children's lives.

Thank you for your consideration.

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4261

Dear Lisa,

Thank you for your reply. The questions we sent (which are only a sampling of the questions we have gathered) were developed with thought and care by our community following a thorough analysis of the pre-CIP report. We have read every single page of the report, multiple times, and have done our best to crystallize our specific concerns about the recommendation to repurpose Nottingham.

We are quite disappointed by APS's response (attached here for School Board member reference). We believe that APS has failed to fully answer many of the genuine questions we have posed, and the

answers that have been provided are often vague, defensive, filibustering, and/or inconsistent with other information provided by APS.

For example, we asked why a traffic study was not conducted. APS answers that one was not "feasible" before making a recommendation on swing space, but does not say why. In addition, APS says that "traffic is a concern at every school, and in every process, and cannot limit the consideration of any site." But the pre-CIP report itself takes a different approach, and does in fact weigh the various options (but not the option to repurpose Nottingham) based on the anticipated impact on traffic, see, e.g., Appendix J, Table 1. Why is Nottingham treated differently?

Moreover, as we have made clear in our questions and in public comment over the past month, traffic at Nottingham--where we currently have only two buses and a population that is 82% walkable--is unique to other schools in Arlington. Our community is very much a neighborhood, with some narrow streets (many of which lack sidewalks) that are full of dog walkers, joggers, bike riders, and children playing. We have already experienced more than enough pedestrian fatalities adjacent to Nottingham over the past 10 years. Those unique features of our school and community deserve individualized consideration, and not blanket dismissals. It is not enough for APS to answer that transportation experts will deal with these critical problems later, once the decision has already been made. With all due respect, will that be before or after our community is forced to endure another pedestrian accident adjacent to our school?

Furthermore, how does APS intend to bus children to Nottingham? How many buses will be necessary? Where will they park? How will APS hire drivers when there is already a shortage? Where will these buses park? It is irresponsible for APS to refuse to answer these questions until after the Board's directional vote. What if there are no good answers to these questions? What if families from other schools (most of which are likely to be in South Arlington) don't want their children to be bussed an hour each day to and from Nottingham, and would prefer a swing space that is more centrally located? Has APS considered these issues, and if so, where and how? Has there been any engagement with the communities most likely to be affected by these changes?

Likewise, we asked about APS's plan to retain teachers during the proposed three-year run up to the transition of Nottingham to swing space. APS's answer was "APS will work closely with the Office of School Support and Human Resources to ensure that staff understands the timeline and process before the change." This answer is wholly unresponsive to the important question we have posed, which is of great concern to many in our community.

We also asked how APS's capacity projections account for the outlier years of COVID. Based on our analysis, it seems that APS's projections are based on estimates from the pandemic period, which was an aberration. The resulting projections show declining enrollments, which we believe is a faulty conclusion given Arlington's pro-growth initiatives, including missing middle and Langston Blvd. development plans. Furthermore, the projections also use local birth rates to estimate future growth, but as we now know, fewer children were born during COVID, and many families moved to Arlington from the city or elsewhere because of the strength of schools in the suburbs. In short, we believe that local birth rates (particularly during the pandemic) and family relocations during COVID are a poor proxy for future growth. We seek to engage with APS on these complex issues, but APS's only answer is to direct us to an Appendix in the pre-CIP that doesn't address our question.

We also asked about APS's plan for extended day--both at Nottingham (where there is currently a waitlist, a problem that will undoubtedly be exacerbated when families from South Arlington, where schools are most likely to be renovated, need an after-school solution for children who will be a 30 minute drive away from home at the end of the school day), and at the schools where you propose to send current Nottingham students, such as Tuckahoe & Discovery. APS's answer--"hire more staff"--is overly simplistic and dismissive. and short sided. How do you intend to do so when there is already a staff shortage? Do you have space for more extended day classrooms? Where have you analyzed this issue and how do you know?

We hope that when we meet as a group, you will truly listen to our concerns, and not defensively dismiss them. The action you propose taking with respect to Nottingham is profound, and as I pointed out in my original letter, we, as a community, do not feel that APS has done enough to appropriately weigh this opportunity cost. We believe that the APS proposal will have deep and troubling impacts on our children and our community for years to come. This is especially true following years of learning loss that all families have endured over the past three years.

We hope that given these high stakes, APS will openly engage with us when we meet later this month, and provide answers to these vital questions from our community.

We look forward to meeting with you.

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4631

Good morning,

I'd like to express my concern about repurposing NES as swing space. My children will both begin at NES and then be moved. On a personal level, I am obviously extremely concerned by the inconsistency, potential for a decline in their education as NES teachers leave, and disruption to their overall community. No doubt Nottingham students will suffer a loss if they lose their school.

If the decision were beneficial to the greater APS community I would be more understanding. However, the decision feels like it was already made and the data was reverse engineered to support the decision. This would be a huge overstepping of power, and not a representation of the citizens. Most concerning is the poor data used to represent demographics and capacity. North Arlington schools are already very high enrollment and the data projections used to justify the decision were the lowest possible. What this means is that likely the schools will all be at capacity when NES closes, and therefore the schools we are assigned to will all certainly exceed capacity. Sure, it'll save money compared to repurposing other spaces and will save some headache compared to renovating in place. But is your plan really to exceed capacity across all the North Arlington schools? South Arlington is already struggling, so why spread the problem to North Arlington?

Please reduce the capacity goals and allow our thriving neighborhood schools to continue reflecting what APS should be about- the best possible education America can offer. Please help South Arlington experience what North Arlington has without just diluting the problems across the whole school system. I am certain that the county could budget for a better solution!

I respect the challenge and the fact that you have all dedicated yourselves to solving it. Please return to the drawing board.

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4261

Good morning, all -

I wanted to thank you for your time yesterday. We know everyone has a busy schedule, especially as we ramp up for the school year.

I want to reiterate that at the end of the day, we all want what is best for students and teachers across the county. It is our sincerest hope that we can find a solution that we all believe best serves the students.

Our community values open dialogue and we genuinely want to understand the answers to our questions, given all that is at stake with this highly impactful proposal. We look forward to continuing our discussions and working together as engaged members of the community.

[attachment]

### **Questions for Arlington County School Board, APS Staff, and Facilities Advisory Committee Regarding Proposal to Repurpose Nottingham**

#### **Core Values and Principles**

1. How does turning a thriving neighborhood school into a swing space align with APS Core Values of Excellence, Equity, Inclusivity, Integrity, Collaboration, Innovation, and Stewardship?
2. How does this move to close a neighborhood school impact APS's boundary policy's six factors: efficiency, proximity, stability, alignment, demographics and contiguity?
  - a. This proposal seems to disregard two principles of the Board's Boundary Policy (B 2.1).
  - b. Proximity – encouraging the relationship between schools and the community by keeping students close to the schools that they attend so that they can walk safely to school or, if they are eligible for bus service, so that bus ride times are minimized.
  - c. Stability – minimizing the number of times that boundary changes affect an individual student who has continued to reside in a particular attendance area, and minimizing the number of students moved to a different school, within a school level, while achieving the objective of the boundary change.
3. How will APS ensure its core value of equity to those students that will be uprooted and housed in the swing school? Specifically in the situations where access to school may require cross-county transportation.
4. How will APS ensure families are easily able to access the school for events such as back to school night or other school hosted functions?

5. What will it take for APS to prioritize keeping a walkable, successful school open and explore more costly options if necessary? This is what taxpayer dollars should be used for.

### **Capacity / Boundaries / Enrollment**

6. How do APS's capacity projections account for the outlier years of 2020 and 2021 due to COVID?

- a. Does APS consider these years to be statistical outliers?
- b. If yes, how are these outliers accounted for in APS's metrics?
- c. If not, why not?

7. How do the 2026 planned boundary changes factor into the plan for swing space?

8. When you disperse Nottingham students to other neighborhood schools, what happens to neighboring schools that are already beginning to reach capacity?

- a. What does APS forecast as the capacity at Tuckahoe in 2026-27?
- b. How about Discovery?
- c. If Tuckahoe will be over 100 percent capacity (which APS's analysis suggests), why is overcrowding neighboring elementary schools acceptable?

9. How do APS's capacity projections account for data suggesting that there was a rise in births in 2021, which would be the class of entering kindergarteners when Nottingham closes?

10. How do you anticipate this affecting middle school enrollment? What are the plans for downstream effects from closing Nottingham?

11. Will there be a transition period in which future Nottingham students who will eventually be sent to a neighboring school could start there instead?

12. Why does APS find it acceptable to constantly shuffle and relocate neighborhood based school populations? Recent examples also include McKinley and Patrick Henry. This is always deeply frustrating and disruptive to our communities. Why can't APS find a longer-term solution to our constant redistricting woes?

13. Why isn't APS prioritizing neighborhood schools over option schools? Options schools really are a luxury, not a necessity. All of those students have to drive to those option schools already. Why not repurpose an option school to preserve Nottingham as a neighborhood school?

14. APS has said that if the capacity projections are wrong, no harm no foul, but APS will just re-open Nottingham. If that's true, has there been any discussion of whether Nottingham would come back as a neighborhood school or an option school?

### **Transportation / Traffic**

15. How does APS plan to hire enough bus drivers (when there already is a shortage) and when this proposal vastly increases the number of buses necessary for students?

16. If APS has to bus students from a school in South Arlington to Nottingham, what will that cost?

- a. What would be the cost per bus per school year?
17. Why has a traffic study not been conducted to see how this proposal will impact traffic and safety across the county?
- a. Did anyone within APS ever recommend a traffic study?
  - b. If so, why was that recommendation not adopted?
18. APS has previously said that a traffic study was not conducted because Nottingham is currently an elementary school and will remain a neighborhood school, and thus, there is no change in use. But what about the fact that Nottingham would go from 82% walking to 100% commuting? Why does that not require a traffic study before any plans more forward to repurpose Nottingham?
19. How many buses will be required to take students OUT of the neighborhood to rezoned schools? How many buses will be required to bring swing space students INTO Nottingham?
20. Why was central location in the county not considered as a factor for swing space, considering that students will have to travel to the swing space daily?
21. Is it acceptable to APS for students to have to travel on school buses for up to one hour each day?
22. What is the average time to drive from each school district to Nottingham during morning and afternoon? How does this compare to other potential swing spaces?
23. How is there enough bus and car dropoff space at Nottingham to accommodate 500-600 students where none are walking?
24. Have you considered the large backups on Sycamore Street when the amount of students driving and bussing to Tuckahoe doubles or triples? Where has this been considered?
25. You say that after the directional vote, APS will study traffic effects and solve them. What if there are no solutions?
- a. What are the possible solution tools in APS's arsenal? How will APS address traffic and pedestrian safety?
26. What were the responses from the planned renovation schools when you discussed with them the proposed plan to bus and commute them to Nottingham?

**Necessity of Swing Space**

27. Does APS believe that swing space is absolutely necessary in 2026?
- a. Are there any scenarios in which swing space will not be needed?
28. Is swing space absolutely necessary if the county decides to prioritize lower impact renovations in the coming years?
29. Why have planning unit shifts for the school that is being renovated not been taken into greater consideration?

30. Under the current proposal, there are acknowledgments that missing middle housing development and future growth could require Nottingham to eventually be reopened as a neighborhood school again. Why go through this process and disruption when growth may require making Nottingham a neighborhood school in a matter of years? Can't efforts be put into a solution that actually solves the main problem without creating multiple other problems?

31. Has Arlington learned from experiences of Fairfax County schools that have been renovating many schools in recent years? I have not heard of Fairfax using swing space and instead has created solutions near the renovated schools. Renovations are already disruptive. Why create more disruption at a county-wide level?

32. What Major Infrastructure Projects are planned for 2026 and beyond? How do we have confidence that a dedicated space is required for numerous years to support students while their building is undergoing extensive renovations without this list?

### **Extended Day**

33. How will the county address longer waitlists at schools already at capacity for Extended Day?

34. What will be done for students who are in the Nottingham Extended Day Program prior to the school closure? Will they receive a guaranteed spot in extended day at the new school (Tuckahoe, Discovery, etc) or will they be put into a lottery for a spot as if they are a new student or new to extended day?

35. What if Extended Day is full at the school the student is transitioning to?

### **Teacher Retention**

36. What is the strategy to retain NES teachers until 2026-27?

37. Had APS consulted with the Nottingham teaching staff regarding this consideration?

38. What about other stakeholders?

39. What steps will be taken to ensure job security for these teachers post-transition?

40. For open positions in the near term, what is APS's plan to recruit, retain, and advance high-quality employees at Nottingham despite the potential for these same employees to be furloughed or transferred by 2026?

### **Lack of complete and accurate data**

41. Why is APS planning to close a school without specifying the construction plans needed and timeline for construction at other APS schools?

42. If the enrollment is expected to climb in parts of Arlington, why not add an entirely new school in that specific region?

43. Why the need to vote now, when in the appendix analysis there are still several "TBD" in sections, specifically about traffic studies and safety?

44. Please describe the renovations contemplated and in planning (with specificity)?

45. Where is the opportunity cost of closing one of the most walkable elementary schools calculated in this analysis?

46. Has thought been given to delay the decision about swing space for at least one year to allow for further analysis and also to provide more time for analysis of the school renovation schedule. Right now, nothing is known about the renovation schedule and timeline, impact.

47. Shouldn't Middle School swing space planning also be considered as part of this process?

48. The same reasons that swing space option 1(b) (student redistribution across nearby schools) was eliminated seem to apply to Nottingham. Viz., divides a school community, complexity of execution for staff/academics, and nearby schools may not have capacity (Tuckahoe). See p. A-186, PDF p. 228. Please explain why this is not the case and why Nottingham is being treated differently.

49. Why are the higher cost options not being considered? We live in one of the wealthiest zip codes in all of the country. Why are we so frequently in this predicament? And shouldn't we have planned for this years ago? What is our long-term (15-20 years) for Arlington schools?

50. How does the Board know if Nottingham is logistically appropriate if the schools for renovation have yet to be identified?

51. Do we know why the existing Montessori Public School of Arlington (MPSA) space can't be utilized instead of demolished?

### **County growth and enrollment**

52. What and when is the data of the upcoming expected enrollment based on?

53. What alternatives exist as part of the Langston Boulevard Plan?

54. Please provide the data regarding projections; and have you contacted Nottingham, Discovery, Tuckahoe, and other schools about their actual 2023-2024 enrollments?

a. If so, when and where?

55. If the JFAC advised that the search focus along major corridors including Crystal City, Pentagon City and Ballston, why was Nottingham nonetheless the recommended site?

56. Based on enrollment trends (table 2 in Swing Space School Site Recommendation Report), Drew and Long Branch are projected to have the largest percent decrease by 2027-2028. Why were they removed from consideration? Drew has Randolph nearby with 79% current utilization.

57. Are there any schools in one concentrated area where it just makes sense to build another new elementary school based on (over)utilization numbers (S Arlington)? Which could make extensive renovations easier on existing space if not over utilized?

58. How confident is APS in project enrollment trends as families adjust to life after the pandemic and may transition from private back to public school?

59. How is APS accounting for the missing middle and the potential for an influx of families in the calculation of future enrollment? Especially when enrollment was not the primary



focus of the latest, approved CIP (not Pre-CIP).

60. What is the level of confidence that APS will secure financing through county bonds for multiple, future major construction projects to justify a dedicated space to house students from those schools?

61. What is this confidence based on?

### **Environment/Green space**

62. How and where were environmental factors taken into account in this analysis?

63. Will trailers be added to the Nottingham field to accommodate a larger number of swing space students and if so, what will happen to the many community activities (baseball, soccer, etc.) that currently take place on the Nottingham field?

64. Have you considered the shared use of green space for Tuckahoe and Discovery schools and how this will affect the students with the influx of enrollment?

65. Will the swing pace proposal have any impact on the field space or playgrounds at Nottingham? The Pre-CIP report states additional trailers can be housed at Nottingham. So is the plan to first dismantle a neighborhood school and then take away its primary green space?

66. How will the increase in busing and for Nottingham students and incoming renovation school students plus additional car traffic impact our environment?

### **Student health**

67. How will students with educational learning plans such IEPs or 504s be supported in this process given that students with ADHD, Autism, and other learning differences struggle with transitions?

68. Has the educational/social emotional impact of disrupting our youngest and most vulnerable students for the second time (pandemic being the first) during a foundational time in their development been considered? If so, where is this considered in the APS report?

69. The pre-CIP report says that APS aims to “ensure all students learn and thrive in safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments.” If this plan gets passed, what is APS’s plan for maintaining a “supportive learning environment” at Nottingham over the next three years when teachers and staff will resign for other, more “permanent” positions elsewhere?

70. Was only cost considered when choosing the option to close an elementary school? The presumption here is the cost of the mental health of our children and ripping apart a thriving community was not considered. Using an existing building or literally any other option would not tax the mental health of our students. Can you please explain this?

71. What happens to the current NES Peer PreK program? Currently this program is offered at Alice West Fleet, Barcroft, Carlin Springs, Dr. Charles R. Drew, Glebe, Hoffman Boston, Innovation, Nottingham, Taylor, and Tuckahoe. Do Taylor and Tuckahoe have the capacity to absorb additional children in these programs or will this program as a whole be impacted across the county (with less seats available in the future)?

72. APS has a goal that by 2024, at least 80% of students with disabilities will spend 80% or more of their day in a general education setting, with non-disabled peers. What steps will be taken to continue to maintain this KPI despite a decrease in locations where the CCP is offered (removing NES)?

### **Community/Stakeholder Engagement**

73. When was the pre-CIP report complete?

74. Was the pre-CIP report ever slated to be released prior to the end of June 2023?

75. If so, who made the decision to hold the report until June 2023?

76. Was there any discussion about wanting the report to be released during the summer, rather than during a school year?

77. What meetings were held with school principals in developing the pre-CIP report?

### **Alternative Sites**

78. Why was Syphax not considered further as a potential swing space?

79. Why was Fairlington Community Center not considered further as a potential swing space?

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4676

Good morning!

[redacted] IEP services at Nottingham Elementary School. [redacted] a few hours per month of Occupational Therapy included in IEP. The occupational therapist at Nottingham (who was fantastic!) retired at the end of last year. I recently heard from [redacted] that a replacement has yet to be hired.

At the last school board meeting, there was some discussion of the number of remaining vacancies within APS. I think the number was 58. Would it be possible for you to share an updated vacancy count with me? And how many of these vacancies are Special Education or OT/PT/SLP positions? How many of these vacancies are for positions at or supporting Nottingham?

I'm deeply concerned that the proposal to close Nottingham and convert the building into swing space may already be impacting recruitment and retention at our school. Is there a plan to ensure that these types of mandated support services continue to be available to students during a transition period? And, should my children ultimately be transferred to Tuckahoe, is there a plan to ensure access to services when the school is estimated to be over 112% capacity?

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SB

It simply does not make sense to close a school in an area where density is increasing. I am opposed to using Nottingham school as a swing space. The Arlington County Board is already approving the building of multi-family structures in the Nottingham-served neighborhoods. We do not need to increase bus traffic by moving Nottingham-neighborhood children elsewhere and other-neighborhood children to

Nottingham. I would like the elected leaders in Arlington to work together - the School Board and the County Board should be working in sync, not at odds.

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SB

Dear Arlington County School Board, Superintendent, Engagement team

Do not close Nottingham Elementary school to neighborhood students! Do not make it into swing space with increased car and bus traffic! Leave it as a walkable neighborhood school that is currently ranked 30th out of 1107 schools in VA!

I want you to firmly understand that I want Nottingham elementary school which is a neighborhood elementary school that has been a cornerstone of this community for the past 60 plus years to remain as it is.

Not only have my children gone there, but now my grandchildren go there. Walkable elementary schools are a critical component of a neighborhood. Nottingham Elementary school is currently ranked 30th out of 1107 elementary schools in the state of VA and should remain as it, is a pillar of the community.

I do not want to have the bus and car traffic that a swing school would create. We have no main roads here and there are only neighborhood streets. In the recent past we have had three traffic-related fatalities in front of the school. Increased car and bus traffic that a swing school would require will create traffic problems and push unnecessary traffic into the neighborhood streets. How many more fatalities will this unnecessary action create? Not one more is acceptable to me.

Why would you possibly want to take a school that is ranked 30th of 1107 and close it?

Why would you possibly want to close a school where 82% of the students can walk to it?

Why would you possibly think it's a good idea to increase bus and car traffic to make a school buried in the middle of a residential neighborhood into swing space?

I strongly urge you to leave Nottingham Elementary school just as it is.

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5039

Hi APS team - I wanted to express our concern with the Pre-CIP report about two changes which would impact our family:

1. Moving students from Nottingham to Tuckahoe which will almost certainly put Tuckahoe over capacity
2. Redirecting Tuckahoe students to Williamsburg, which will no longer be walkable (whereas Swanson is walkable today)

We would welcome alternative solutions. As the plan currently stands, we would likely have to consider sending our children to private school.

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5023

Dear APS staff,

I urge APS to look at swing space solutions that do not displace students from their school communities. Students, teachers, administrators, and parents work hard to build social capital that helps students to navigate all the challenges of learning. Boundary changes uproot a student not only from a building, but from the community they have built. While such swaps may be easy for some students, for others, it may be a major setback.

My son [redacted] at Discovery and I am concerned that the swing space at Nottingham could lead to him being placed at another school. I think that would be a hard transition.

I would wholeheartedly support any tax increases needed to fund more school construction or to develop temporary spaces for a school community to persist while renovations occur.

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5057

Hi School Board,

I am a former parent of two children at Nottingham Elementary. We no longer live in Nottingham district [redacted] but am writing about serious concerns to close Nottingham. It seems like the school board is once again making a big mistake by potentially fixing a "medium" term problem and creating a much larger long term problem. Here are just some of my concerns:

- (1) teacher retention concerns/impact of uncertainty on the Nottingham community prior to closure;
- (2) problems in the pre-CIP analysis, specifically, the impacted student analysis; the neighboring schools will be overcapacity once Nottingham is closed
- (3) (lack of) available funds for APS's planned renovations, and corresponding uncertainty about actual need for swing space in 2026; it looks like APS won't be using the school site as a swing space for many many years
- (4) concerns about APS process/timing/transparency;
- (5) specific social/emotional and post-COVID concerns about students likely to be impacted by this proposal and
- (6) the neighborhood has already had THREE fatalities in front of Nottingham over the last 10 years. The neighborhood can't handle the additional car traffic.

I hope you seriously listen to my concern and others. Thank you for your attention.

5062

Hey folks, the Teams meeting seems like a nice way to allow for many folks to participate, however the options chosen kept us from being able to contribute our questions (chat was disabled and no options were available to submit questions). If there was a place to submit questions it was unintuitive and while many questions were answered it was disappointing. In a lot of ways it's a microcosm of the process as a whole...

The overall process here has been disappointing and I think we are frankly making a decision and then finding cherry picked data to support that decision, not very impressive. I am still not convinced that the community that spent so much money to make new schools recently due to "crowding" appreciates having its money wasted to then close a school with MOST of the answers coming down to "we haven't had time yet". Why in the world are we looking to vote on a decision that will negatively impact at the very least 3 - 4 schools of interrupted children, when we could slowly make a decision that at worst "inconveniences" our back office staff. Our school district needs to recover from the last few years just like many others around us, and when we've established a normal rhythm and see the patterns after the BIGGEST impact to our district in the last 20 years then we should be able to make decisions that benefit the kids the most. If we need to rebuild our schools, then we should plan it out and come up with an option in that part of the community to support those families. Moving kids around is hard and beside the obvious negative to the Nottingham Community we are proposing to set up a space that is frankly a half an hour away from most of these other schools, what a transportation nightmare.

The cost to the Arlington School Children is significant, and the main refrain has been that it's "too expensive" or "we didn't want to wait". We will find ourselves in a spot where parents flee the system that they think will harm their children and find other ways to do what you are here to do. Let's find a better way by starting to question "do we even need a swing space?" and then when that has real data, not "see the report, but oh we haven't done that study yet" then we should talk about this or something like this again next year or the year after.

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5063

At the community engagement event tonight one of the presenters commented that there is no sequencing or rationale involved in the Nottingham and MS boundary change processes. There are a number of planning units whose children are affected by both decisions and we would ask that you approach these with a little more deliberation and consideration.

Our children are zoned for Tuckahoe though we are blocks from Cardinal. With the Nottingham decision, we will end up being bused to a school that is more likely to be over capacity and using the trailers. Then, because we'll be moved to Williamsburg, we will also not be able to walk to our middle school and instead will have to be bused there.

Meanwhile other kids will move from Tuckahoe to Cardinal and then go to Williamsburg in contrast to the rest of their elementary peers.

If you're going to do reboundary for the elementary schools because of the Nottingham decision, you need to think through how that affects these planning units for the middle school decision, not tell parents that "there is no rationale or sequencing here."

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5065

Dear Lisa and all,

I wanted to see if I could better articulate the issue that the Nottingham PTA raised this evening regarding the impacted students analysis included in the pre-CIP report. A number of parents tried to raise this issue in the chat this evening (and many more have tried to raise it in APS engagements over the past few weeks), but given the format of tonight's meeting (which relied on written questions and did not allow for follow-up discussion), it seems like our point was never fully understood by APS staff. So we wanted to send this email to see if we can explain.

The pre-CIP report itself states that the elementary school recommended for repurposing was ultimately selected by the number of students who would be impacted by the closure. Indeed, that's what the flow/decision chart on page 253 shows. Further, in a footnote on page 255 of the report, APS notes that the number of impacted students was determined by considering the students moved from the closed school, along with students that APS was able to identify will need to be moved from the receiving school in order to balance enrollments. And so, in this way, the pre-CIP recommendation purports to account for moves that are known to be necessary at the time the report was drafted.

In the report pages that follow, APS displays different scenarios of student movements (pages 257 to 262). These pages, and this analysis, is ultimately used by APS to zero in on Nottingham as the school selected for repurposing.

Under the Nottingham closure plan (page 258), APS proposes to send 150 students from Nottingham to Tuckahoe, which in the real world, using APS using APS's own stated projections for 2026, would result in Tuckahoe being at 114% capacity.

In contrast, the Discovery closure plan proposes to send only 100 students to Tuckahoe (see page 257), resulting in a considerably less overcrowded school than the Nottingham scenario.

We think that this 50 student difference is material, particularly when considered in conjunction with the typo that we identified regarding the number of students impacted by the Discovery plan (that number should be 555, not 578). That is because, no matter how many students need to be moved from Tuckahoe under the Discovery plan, it will always be the case that 50 more students will have to be moved from Tuckahoe under the Nottingham plan. And when those 50 students are added to the total number of impacted students in the APS analysis, then the result is that Nottingham no longer has the fewest of a number of impacted students.

In this scenario, and assuming APS's projections as stated in the report are correct, Nottingham's closure will impact 558 students, whereas Discovery's closure would impact 555 students.

Moreover, this result will always be the same, no matter how many students APS has to move from Tuckahoe based on real world conditions in 2026, because the Nottingham plan will always require 50 more students being moved than the Discovery plan.

We fully appreciate the complexity introduced by Lois this evening regarding planning unit moves, and her point that the math is not as simple as APS presents it to be in the pre-CIP report, because student moves would have to be made based on real world conditions at the time of the re-boundary process. We understand that this will likely result in differences from what APS has presented in these charts in the report.

Where we disagree, however, is that we don't think this means that APS can ignore this difference, and ignore the fact that closing Discovery would impact the fewest number of students under APS's own analysis. Rather, we think these real world realities demonstrate why deciding which elementary school to close (if that is what APS is determined to do, with which we disagree) based on impacted students is an arbitrary metric.

As we have stated to you over the course of the past eight weeks, we believe there are many other criteria to be used in selecting an appropriate school to close, if that is what APS and the School Board are determined to do. However, APS cannot claim to make this decision based on impacted students, and still insist that Nottingham is the right choice. The math simply doesn't add up, and we believe the APS needs to address this issue in writing with a revised report. This is not simply "a matter of our opinion," as you stated in the meeting this evening; it's there in black and white, and we believe it must be dealt with.

In sum, APS says it wants to close the school whose closure will impact the fewest number of students. For the reasons I've stated, namely, the 50 additional students sent to Tuckahoe under the Nottingham plan, coupled with the typo in the report regarding the number of impacted students under the Discovery plan, that school is plainly not Nottingham. To be clear, we do not think it should be Discovery, either, but we do think APS needs to update and be transparent about its analysis.

We would appreciate time to meet with you regarding this issue, specifically. Please let us know if we can schedule time for a call or meeting.

(Copying Reid Goldstein for visibility)

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5032

Attached is a press release from Claire Noakes, President of the CCPTA. I'd love to hear your thoughts on this.

Here are the main points as we understand it:

- APS does not have funds to start school renovations until FY2032
- A swing space created in 2026 would be empty for 6 years
- Disadvantaged communities rely on their school community for support and are "time-poor". Consequently, creating a swing space 30 min away would burden these disadvantaged communities the most.

- Recommendation to address near-term capacity imbalances by first trying voluntary transfers to schools with excess capacity.

Claire has no particular allegiance to Nottingham. She represents all the PTAs in Arlington County. She also serves as a member of the School and County Board Joint Facilities Advisory Commission and the County Board Fiscal Affairs Advisory Commission.

Thank you for your time. I enjoyed the "Welcome Back" video for APS!

[attachment]

Claire Noakes

president@arlingtonccpta.org

### **APS MUST ALIGN CAPITAL PROJECT PLANNING WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS AND BOND CAPACITY TIMELINES**

#### *Swing Space May Not Be the Right Solution for Communities Needing Social Supports*

[ARLINGTON, VA, September 8] – The executive board of the County Council of PTAs (“CCPTA”) is concerned that Arlington Public School’s 2023 pre-Capital Improvement Plan Report (“pre-CIP Report”) fails to align proposed projects with community needs and available bond capacity timelines, resulting in misallocation of resources and exacerbation of current inequities. The School Board should instead review the results of the facilities framework study, apply a uniform set of factors in evaluating how to prioritize among identified needs, and determine when funding will be available before approving more spending projects.

Seventeen of our thirty-seven school buildings have not had a major renovation in over twenty years, resulting in a backlog of need. Recent spending decisions and currently proposed spending projects have monopolized our bond issuance capacity until at least FY 2032, leaving insufficient funding for a major renovation. The executive board of the CCPTA is repeating our concern – first expressed during the prior CIP – that the School Board’s decision to approve project spending without accounting for the long-term facilities needs of the entire community has likely jeopardized our ability to meet those needs for the majority of our schools.

The School Board directed the Superintendent to propose a location to be developed into swing space by the fall of 2026. The pre-CIP Report is proposing to spend an additional \$5 million to close an elementary school and convert it into a swing space. Yet the lack of available funds for a major renovation will cause the swing space to stay empty for six years, while other identified needs that could have been paid for with that \$5 million will go unmet.

Additionally, our most disadvantaged communities rely on our school communities for multiple social supports, such as bilingual coordinators, referrals for legal matters involving immigration status or domestic violence interventions, food pantries, and social workers. Many residents in these disadvantaged communities do not own a private vehicle, and parents of young children – especially any single-parent households – are generally “time-poor.” The pre-CIP report proposes to bus students from a renovated school to the swing space, with a plan to provide families access to Uber accounts when they need to travel to school to take a child to the doctor. It is unclear whether parents currently



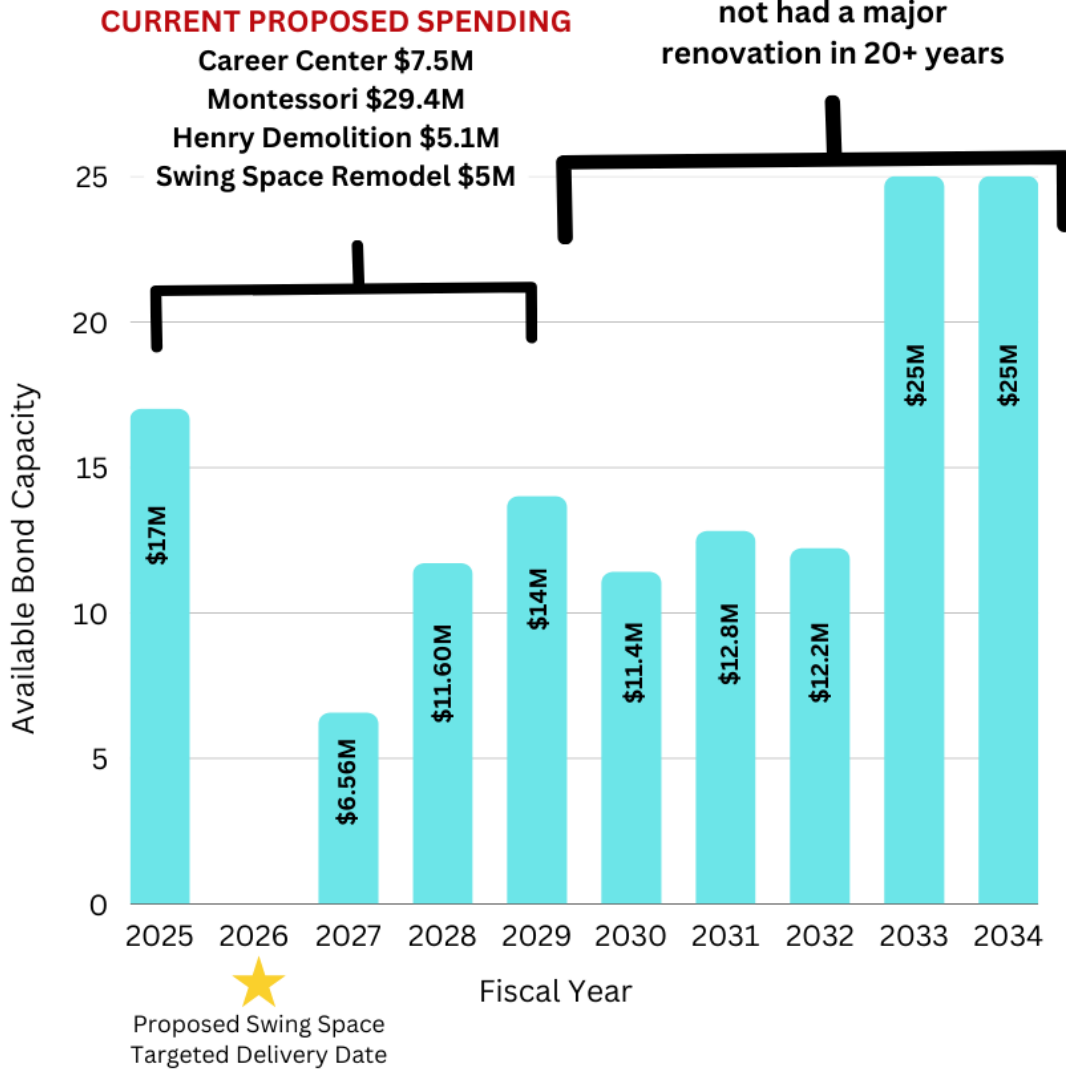
accessing the full social support structure at a school within a short, walkable distance would continue to access these supports to the same degree if a thirty-minute Uber ride each way is required.

These social supports are critical for stabilizing families in order to equip students to learn, but the pre-CIP Report fails to consider how the use of swing space may create access barriers for families, as compared to maintaining the provision of social services in a nearby, walkable location. We urge APS to coordinate with the County to determine whether the creation of a satellite social support services office that is physically located in proximity to renovated schools in our most disadvantaged communities is required under a swing space option. We further urge APS to incorporate the costs of such approach during any evaluation of the cost-efficiency of swing space, as compared to the costs of leased office space or temporary modular school buildings located close to a renovated school.

Finally, the pre-CIP Report seeks to adjust boundaries in order to rebalance school capacity between schools that are too crowded and schools that are operating below the optimal utilization. The executive board of the CCPTA believes that APS should first try opening up targeted voluntary transfers, with a lottery system if demand exceeds supply, between schools. This method could sufficiently address capacity challenges in the near term. Targeted voluntary transfers could be done thoughtfully, to avoid any further concentrations of poverty at an overcrowded school, and bus transportation could be provided at hubs when there is a critical mass of students going from one area to a receiving school. Voluntary transfers are the least disruptive tool to balance enrollment, if done in a thoughtful manner that creates or preserves economic diversity at schools.

The chart below shows the anticipated timing of both project spending and bond capacity availability, which leads the executive board of the CCPTA to conclude that funding for a major renovation (likely to exceed \$25 million) would not be available until the start of FY 2032:

**\$88.65M Available for the remaining 34 APS schools, 17 of which have not had a major renovation in 20+ years**



Sources and Data: The pre-CIP report is available at: <https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/57/2023/06/Pre-CIP-Report-2024-2033-Finalv2.pdf>. The CIP Funding Scenarios document, discussed at the Jun 23, 2022 - CIP Public Hearing, is available at: [https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/arlington/Board.nsf/files/CFNKAR50F439/\\$file/Att%20A2%20June%2023%20CIP%20Funding%20Scenarios.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/arlington/Board.nsf/files/CFNKAR50F439/$file/Att%20A2%20June%2023%20CIP%20Funding%20Scenarios.pdf). The available funding in FY 2025 is due to a prior CIP placeholder of \$15 M set aside for the Montessori Public School of Arlington building refresh, along with \$2 M placeholder to demolish the current building. \$7.5 million is the additional cost of the new Arlington Career Center that was not reflected in the prior CIP. For more information, see: <https://www.apsva.us/engage/arlington-career-center-project/>. Recent estimates for the cost of the Montessori Public School of Arlington building refresh have indicated the cost to be \$24.4 - \$29.4 million, although the placeholder estimate was approved for \$15 million in the prior CIP. \$5 million is proposed

to be used to alter the parking lot to allow for more bus travel at the swing space location. \$5.1 million is proposed as the cost to demolish the current Patrick Henry Elementary School building to create green space. The \$25 million in 2033-34 is based on APS's stated assumption in the prior CIP that the County Manager expects to allocate \$25 million of bond capacity each year.

## BOUNDARIES/ IMMERSION

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SB

I have concerns about the methodologies employed and conclusions reached in the Draft Middle School Boundary Recommendation in the recent Pre-CIP Report.

While the decision to move the Immersion Program to Kenmore might be sound, the report doesn't actually provide any justification for this choice. The closest thing is the Middle School Immersion Program Transportation Report. That report, however, only assesses the impacts on transportation from relocating the Immersion Program without changes to school boundaries. In addition, that report relies on an incredibly crude "traffic light score card" system for assessing the impact on various criteria. Among other things, this means that for the Available Capacity criterion the impact of moving the program to Williamsburg would be the same as to Swanson, despite the fact that Williamsburg currently has significantly more spare capacity.

The resulting boundary recommendation involves taking children who live 3 blocks from Dorothy Hamm and busing them to Williamsburg, which would then have the highest capacity utilization rate of all the middle schools.

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SB

Ms. Gonzales,

Thank you for your response. A key issue for me is the lack of detail that has been presented regarding the "evaluation and consideration of various factors." Without a full picture of everything that went into the decision-making process how can the public have any faith in the results? I am skeptical about the Draft Middle School Boundary Recommendation for these two reasons:

1. Of the limited supporting information presented in the Pre-CIP Report, some is of questionable validity (e.g. issues with the Middle School Immersion Program Transportation Report that I raised in my initial email).
2. In 2021 I witnessed the Department of Facilities and Operations make an obvious miscalculation that had substantial consequences for the students of APS (details below\*).

I can believe that there could be valid reasons to take children who live three blocks from Dorothy Hamm and bus them to Williamsburg, even when the latter is the more crowded school. Without seeing a full accounting of that decision, however, it seems far more likely that such a decision is flawed.

Thank you,

[redacted]

\* Details:

In March of 2021 the CDC changed COVID classroom spacing guidelines from 6' between students to 3'. Addressing a question in a SB meeting about the change's potential to allow for more students in classrooms, Bridget Loft said that after working with Facilities it was determined that the change would give about 20% additional capacity in classrooms.

The 20% increase seemed wrong to me, given that cutting the spacing in half could raise the density by a theoretical 300% (twice as many children in each dimension). Using the same constraints APS was following (except for reducing minimum spacing from 6' to 3'), I modified a variety of APS's example classroom layouts to show how for each capacity could easily be increased by 100% (the amount needed to support normal school instead of hybrid). I provided APS and the SB this information, and about a month later APS admitted that capacity could in fact be increased by much more than 20%.

Having the correct 100%+ figure in March could have allowed for schools to change from hybrid to full in-person for the last few months of the school year. A lack of transparency and accountability on the part of the APS administration means that I can't know whether the initial 20% was incompetence or a lie used to support the administration's preferred course of action. Either is reason for the public to distrust the Draft Middle School Boundary Recommendation without a full accounting of everything that went into it.

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SB

As you know, I've been an involved immersion parent, with students are Key and Gunston, for the past seven years. The immersion program is a jewel.

I find the email below, which presents the decision to move the Immersion middle school program to Kenmore as a done deal (there will be information sessions on the relocation, APS will start a boundary process assuming the relocation), deeply troubling.

There has been no engagement with immersion families, with Kenmore families or with the public about this change. Moreover, it seems, from earlier discussions about moving the immersion middle school program, that this change would be ill-advised. Kenmore is NOT centrally located and is, in fact, our least accessible middle school for all transportation modes. There is no space available at Kenmore and putting immersion there would displace vulnerable communities who should have priority for having a school nearby.

During the immersion visioning process, moving immersion to Dorothy Hamm middle school was discussed because (1) there's room at Hamm and (2) more families would stay with immersion at that location.

Please don't all staff to push through this I'll advised change with no engagement over the summer.

Thank you for your time and for your service

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SB

My daughter graduated Nottingham Elementary school and is one of the handful of kids that gets zoned to Swanson Middle School. I had attended the Williamsburg Info session in the winter and after speaking with the principal - Mr. Boykin - I was under the impression that Williamsburg was not at capacity and that a transfer should work out without any issues. However, we are on the waitlist at #7 now (gone down from #19 originally).

Additionally, after attending the school board meeting last Thursday, looks like a middle school rezoning proposal will be underway which might help the handful of Nottingham kids that get zoned into Swanson in the future year and my daughter might get moved to Williamsburg next year as a result of it. Would it instead be possible for her to get transferred this year to Williamsburg - at the start of her middle school?

It is very hard for these 3-4 kids from Nottingham that have to go to Swanson and get separated from majority of their school-mates. Any guidance you are able to help provide here will be helpful.

Thanks for your review and consideration.

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SB

Thank you Iliana for your reply. It is very unfortunate that the 4-5 kids that live south of Langston zoned to Nottingham are the only kids from Nottingham that go to Swanson which is already over capacity, separating them from their entire batch of Nottingham school mates that all mostly go to Williamsburg. Transition to middle school is not easy and this does not help my pre-teen.

I am now getting her mentally prepared to attend Swanson, away from all her Nottingham school mates to start out fresh. Hopefully once she adjusts in Swanson she will get to stay at Swanson throughout and not be switched in the last year with the middle school rezoning. It will not be helpful to move her again especially in the last year of middle school. Hopefully as part of the middle school rezoning there are options available where kids in last year of school don't have to move.

I know my problems are much smaller compared to the overall zoning work that APS team is working on but looks like our little pocket south of Langston going to Nottingham is not very well-served and hope the rezoning work will address that and also provide some prioritized options.

Thank you

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3938

Why are you taking away the Spanish Immersion from Gunston and moving it to Kenmore? Seems like another instance where gunston gets worse and other places get better. Typical of the education board about not caring for south Arlington.

3958

Thank you for this. Our family would strongly support this change. Although it would personally benefit us, I do think having a centrally located immersion program is healthy for balancing socioeconomic dynamics in the community. Meeting in the middle is a great idea.

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3953

Good morning,

I am writing today with concern that APS is pursuing a path that would necessitate a move of the immersion middle school program from Gunston to Kenmore, without any public engagement on that move. I urge you to commit to two actions:

- 1) Commit to collecting data and taking feedback on the move of the immersion middle school program to Kenmore or to another middle school, separate from a middle school boundary process.
- 2) Communicate publicly and specifically to all immersion elementary and middle school families how APS is taking feedback on this proposal.

I appreciate that APS staff and the School Board said at last night's work session that APS is not committing to the move and is instead starting a public engagement process on the move. However, as indicated in the email below (see highlighted language), APS is not taking feedback on the move or collecting further data on the wisdom of the move. Instead, APS is planning only to inform immersion families about the move. Notably, APS did not bother to inform immersion elementary families - who would be impacted by any move - about this decision.

Moreover, the plan laid out by staff is to kick off a middle school boundary process in the fall that assumes the move of the immersion program. As we learned in the Fall 2020 Elementary School Boundary Process, APS will not support analysis of middle school boundary adjustments without a move of the immersion program or with a move to a school other than Kenmore. The School Board will only have the choice of moving immersion or not adjusting any middle school boundaries. Such process does not allow for a practical consideration of the wisdom of this proposed move.

Notably, immersion has been proposed to move to this campus twice in the last decade - once in this exact form, and once in the form of moving an elementary program to Carlin Springs. When thoughtfully considered, both times, APS decided not that this campus is a poor location for immersion - or any choice program. The transportation challenges along Carlin Springs are simply too great to support a choice program at this location.

I will add that I am speaking against personal interest here - the Kenmore campus is closer to our home than the Gunston campus. However, I have serious concerns about the wisdom of this decision for the good of APS, for immersion students and for students living near Kenmore. I have even more serious concerns that the School Board would allow staff to plow forward with a process that does not take feedback or collect data on such a major decision.

Thank you for your time and for your service.

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3971

Good morning

I am writing to relay my support for the move from Gunston to Kenmore. The more centralized location of Kenmore will make it more accessible to my family and many others. We are a native Spanish speaking family and value the ability to have our children received education in both languages throughout their academic journey in Arlington. We are in the Tuckahoe neighborhood and the first year my son attended school at Claremont he had a 40-45 mins bus drive. The switch to Key has made things much more enjoyable for us in terms of commute and community. Access to an immersion school closer to us would make transportation easier, but also ensure a sense of community since more of our fellow immersion families in our area would also be able to attend.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

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3972

Good morning,

I would like to voice my support for moving the middle school immersion program to Kenmore. It is a more centrally located school and will allow greater access for all students.

Thank you!

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4024

Dear Honorable School Board Members, Dr. Durán, and APS Engage staff--

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposal to move the middle school level of the immersion program from Gunston to Kenmore. Unfortunately, I don't have the bandwidth to engage much further than this email -- and I imagine I'm not the only immersion parent who feels this way -- so this will likely be all you hear from me. I hope, nevertheless, that it counts for something.

My primary reason for writing is that I want to ask you to do your best to solicit and consider the views of current immersion families who are NOT among the loudest voices in this feedback process, including those who seem to refrain from participating at all. At the end of the day, in my humble opinion, **the middle school immersion program should be located where the most immersion families will participate.** How can you figure this out? Maybe the Key and Claremont principals can conduct their own survey to find out (a) whether families plan to continue in the program if it stays at Gunston, (b) if they would continue if it moves to Kenmore, (c) if they don't plan to continue either way, or (d) if they plan to continue regardless of location? It seems like a simple survey to do, and the principals of the two elementary schools seem like the people best poised to make sure that every voice is counted. Staff could follow up to make sure they get responses from every family, just like they do for the first-day paperwork, for example.



I understand why APS (and the county as a whole) prefers to use a variety of community engagement platforms to solicit opinions and foster discussion, and I've certainly attended enough of these events (APS- and county-led) to see how they work. It makes sense for many initiatives, but I don't think it makes a lot of sense for this one. At present, the middle school immersion program has, what, about 100-some students per grade? Honestly, it can't fall far below that and remain sustainable. The move you forced on Escuela Key to the former ATS site, promising our school wouldn't shrink and then immediately shrinking it to 4 kindergarten classes instead of 6, was one step in the wrong direction; acquiescing to Claremont parent demands to shrink their program was a second. Moving the middle school immersion program to a location where students won't come could set the whole program back years. Our family has been at Key long enough to be well acquainted with Dr. Myers' view: **Turn no family away!** We had 720+ children at the old Escuela Key, and she would have welcomed more any day of the week. **The fact is that the immersion program has to start out HUGE!** I don't have actual statistics in front of me, as I imagine you do (I hope?), but my personal experience over the last 10 years is that Escuela Key (and probably Claremont, too) has far more attrition than a neighborhood school, due in part to our international backgrounds and work assignments and in part to the demands of an immersion education, which some parents decide are too much. If we want our immersion high schoolers to thrive with a vibrant community and many academic options available to them, then we need as many elementary immersion kids as we can possibly accommodate, and we need to make sure they have what they need to stay in the program if they want to stay.

Of course, this gets me to my side point, which is that there needs to be a marketing campaign for immersion education, especially to Spanish speakers. The APS bilingual immersion program is a great fit for many children, but it was in fact designed with native Spanish speakers topmost in mind. Having had countless conversations with countless Spanish-speaking parents in Arlington over the years **who have never even heard of the APS bilingual immersion program**, I remain utterly baffled. I don't get it. Instead of hearing that APS is planning an advertising campaign for the immersion program or more community outreach (maybe at the immersion elementaries themselves?), I hear, "Well, obviously Spanish speakers must not really want this because the application numbers are barely sufficient to fill the spots available." It's enough to make me want to scream with frustration... APS, please, please, please do the right thing:

1. **Tell people, especially Spanish speakers, about the immersion program.**
2. **Include science and data to explain why bilingual immersion will be great for everyone.** It's a natural and logical assumption for immigrants from other countries to want their kids to assimilate as quickly as possible and become fluent in English as soon as possible. You **must** explain why immersion will work for these families if you believe it to be true. Especially when we go to 80/20. As a native English speaker who grew up in a bilingual French-English environment in West Africa (with preschool and kindergarten in French), I know the impact of early bilingual experience and the benefits, but I can also understand why it's not so easy to go along with it from the secondary language perspective.
3. **Enlist help from us!** I'm not really talking about me here, although I'm always happy to help; I'm talking about families from our communities. Why not start with families currently in the Key and Claremont communities to reach out to their neighbors and friends and to host informational events about immersion? And maybe PTAs and Padres Unidos groups would like to

organize support for these efforts as well. After all, we are there to support the schools and our communities.

All this said, I will tell you that I personally don't care whether the middle school immersion program is at Kenmore or Gunston. We are equally likely to send our rising 5th graders to either school. Good luck with the feedback and deliberative processes you've established for this decision. To reiterate my primary request, I just hope you'll make the effort to know how this will affect **every** family, not just the ones who (like me!) are already knocking at your door. Thanks for your attention.

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4038

Dear APS School Board,

As Escuela Key parents, we are writing to express our strong support for the relocation of the Spanish immersion program to a central location in our County. The proposed move from Gunston to Kenmore Middle School will undoubtedly provide the best possible educational experience for our students, ensuring equitable access for all. One of the primary benefits of centralizing the immersion program is the increased participation from parents and the wider community. By bringing the program to a central location, parents will find it more convenient to engage with their child's education. This increased parental involvement can greatly enhance the learning experience and contribute to improved academic outcomes.

Furthermore, centralization will provide greater access to the immersion program for all students. Schools situated in central locations are typically more easily accessible to a larger segment of the population. By eliminating transportation constraints, we will foster inclusivity and make it easier for students from various backgrounds to participate in the program, regardless of whether they live in North or South Arlington. Exposure to diverse ideas and perspectives enriches students' educational experience and prepares them to thrive in our multicultural society.

Additionally, relocating the immersion program will alleviate overcrowding in Gunston. This will free up much-needed space, allowing the school to better accommodate the needs of local students who are not enrolled in the immersion program. By creating more space, Gunston can provide additional resources and opportunities to the students within its immediate community.

Lastly, continuing the immersion program through middle school is essential for ensuring fluency and deepening students' language skills. Centralizing the program will help to streamline connectivity between elementary and middle schools, ensuring a seamless transition for students. This continuity in their language education will result in improved fluency levels and a more comprehensive understanding of the language. To be mindful of taxpayer's dollars, moving the immersion program to Kenmore is the fiscally responsible thing to do too. What is the point of funding immersion programs if many of the students drop out before the 6<sup>th</sup> grade due to a poorly planned and geographically challenging location such as Gunston? Although we are a Key family, our neighborhood elementary school is Tuckahoe. Keeping the immersion middle school at Gunston would pose significant transportation and logistical problems for families such as ours who live almost the direct opposite corner of the County from Gunston.

Ultimately, the relocation of the immersion program to a central location will boost accessibility, diversity, and opportunities for all students involved. It aligns with our shared goal of providing the best education possible for our community's children. Thank you for considering our perspective and for your dedication to making our education system more equitable and inclusive. We are confident that this move will bring countless benefits to our students and our community as a whole.

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4043

To the School Board,

I am a 20-year Arlington resident, and our daughter is [redacted] at Ashlawn. We already had been concerned that more than half of her elementary school would be going to a different middle school; we have learned that under the new boundary realignment process, all of Ashlawn *except our tiny planning unit* (13050) will go to Swanson, and the roughly 10 children in our planning unit will go to Kenmore.

I very much hope that this is an oversight that you can fix. Our daughter's elementary school experience has been far less than we had hoped, with more than a year of kindergarten and first grade in virtual learning. Middle school always is difficult for children, and it will be so much more difficult if she is placed in a school where she barely knows a single student.

I beg you to take the interests of our tiny neighborhood into consideration and place the 13050 planning unit in Swanson. Please call me at [redacted] if you need any additional information.

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4045

Hello Planning Committee and School Board,

I'm writing about the **MS boundary change process**. I'm a mom [redacted] Ashlawn, [redacted] Kenmore [redacted].

I understand that Arlington's population continues to change and boundaries have to be redrawn. Through the pages of insightful data in your proposal, I understand this is complex.

In the recommended option, when Spanish Immersion moves to Kenmore, **PU 13050 is one of just 2 out of 17 Ashlawn PUs that does not go to Swanson**. I am writing to ask that **PU 13050 stays with its other Ashlawn (and neighborhood!) PUs and goes to Swanson, even if immersion comes to Kenmore, OR that you reconsider the very non-conforming shape of the Swanson/Kenmore boundary and send a balanced ratio of Ashlawn students to Swanson and Kenmore.**

**Did you know that after middle school, students in PU 13050 are again in the minority because they leave Kenmore for W&L while most of their peers go to Wakefield?** By continuing to break this small group of students from the larger group to a new school in both MS and HS, you ask these students to start over on friendships twice, meanwhile many other children in the county stay with their elementary friends from Elementary to MS to HS. This is not an equitable experience.

**Lastly, the children who would experience this change were significantly impacted by COVID remote/hybrid school environments starting in Pre-K/Kindergarten, which delayed social/emotional learning, a widely documented result of remote learning during the COVID years. Impacting the children socially once again at middle school would be difficult as Teachers & Parents both are working overtime to "catch up" on social/emotional learning.**

Please don't ask these kids to completely rebuild relationships twice. **Align PU 13050 with the rest of Ashlawn at Swanson in BOTH scenarios - if Spanish immersion moves to Gunston, or if it does not.**

Thank you

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4061

Mr. Goldstein,

I wanted to draw your attention to a substantial problem that will fall on the shoulders of a handful of Ashlawn students, including my daughter, under the staff's middle school boundary proposal. As I explain below, I am writing to ask that you consider the problems that this staff proposal will cause for this small group of Ashlawn students, and fix it by sending all Ashlawn students to Swanson.

We live in [redacted] (Planning Unit 13050), and my daughter is [redacted] in Ashlawn. Currently, about half the school (including our planning unit) goes to Kenmore, and the other half goes to Swanson. That already is less than ideal, but at least she would be entering middle school with half of the classmates who she has gotten to know over the past six years. This is particularly important because in high school, these Ashlawn students are once again split between Yorktown and Washington-Liberty.

Under the staff's proposal, **15 of Ashlawn's 17 planning units** would go to Swanson, with only our planning unit (13050) and one other going to Kenmore. Based on my knowledge of our neighborhood (many children have always gone to private schools, and we have a lot of families without children), this means that my daughter would be entering middle school with roughly 10 students who she knows from elementary school. I can only think back to my middle school days and cannot imagine the anxiety that such a prospect would produce.

If losing nearly all their friends in middle school was not punishment enough, once they finish three years at Kenmore, the children in our planning unit will not be reunited with many of their elementary school friends in high school. Ashlawn is once again split between Yorktown and Washington-Liberty. Under your staff's proposal, the students in these two tiny planning units from Ashlawn are the only children in all of Arlington who are split from their elementary school peers in both middle school **and** high school. Moreover, if this small group of former Ashlawn students makes friends in Kenmore, they will most likely not see them again in high school, as most of Kenmore goes to Wakefield, and this small group goes to Washington-Liberty. I know that this plan was not intended to isolate and create social challenges for this small group of Ashlawn students, but that is exactly what it will do.

I can't fathom that 10 students would make such a difference to Swanson's population that the school district staff would find enrollment levels alone as sufficient reason to impose such a cruel fate on 10 children. So I also assume that logistics play into this decision, as our neighborhood is a zoned walking area for Kenmore. I can tell you from more than a decade of driving down Carlin Springs that, while we

might be within the distance of a walking zone from Kenmore, it is a terribly dangerous walk even with security guards, and many families still have to figure out how to drive their children because they do not feel comfortable with their children walking past such large amounts of traffic.

The easy solution to this is to send all Ashlawn students to Swanson. I assume that each school has numerical targets for enrollment estimates, but it is terribly unfair to place that burden entirely on the shoulders of about 10 students per year. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss. You can reach me at [redacted].

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4050

Hi,

I'm writing about the MS boundary change process. I appreciate the need to rebalance enrollment across the schools and I admire the work the Planning and Evaluation staff have done to prepare possible options.

In the proposed map where Spanish Immersion moves to Kenmore, PU 13050 and 13062 are the only Ashlawn PUs that do not go to Swanson (the other 15 PUs go to Swanson). There are **only three other** elementary schools that have wide splits like this in the proposal (Barcroft and Barrett), but for THOSE schools, **the entire elementary rejoins together in high school** (Wakefield and WL, respectively).

**Ashlawn does not, we are split again between Yorktown and WL.**

I am writing to ask that you **align PU 13050 and PU 13062 with the rest of Ashlawn at Swanson** so that these two little PUs do not remain the ONLY two Planning Units in the County that are split from their elementary classmates in MS AND in HS.

MS is a difficult time, and sending these kids to MS with only a handful of classmates is really setting them up for emotional distress at a critical time in their development. Ashlawn is disproportionately split between Yorktown and WL, and isolating this PU (13050) is unfair to these students that have formed bonds and connections with friends.

Our PU has a number of option students (because we're right between two option schools) so the number of students in the PU isn't the same as the number that actually attend elementary school together.

Please don't leave these kids alone. **Align PU 13050 and 13062 with the rest of Ashlawn at Swanson in BOTH scenarios - if Spanish immersion moves to Kenmore or if it does not. Please don't cause unfair and disproportionate emotional burden on our kids by dividing the elementary community twice, in middle school and in high school. This does not happen to any other school or PUs in APS.**

In fact, **Barrett PUs 12030 and 12031 already go to Kenmore**, but in the proposal you're sending them to Swanson. You could switch 12030 and 12031 with Ashlawn's 13050 and 13062, thereby making Barrett more evenly split between Swanson and Kenmore, and not dividing Ashlawn so disproportionately.

Thanks for your consideration! Hope you are having a nice summer -

4068

Hi APS Team,

I have a child who will be [redacted] at ASFS in the Fall of 2023. I saw the proposal for redrawing the boundary that would take place in Fall of 2026. [redacted] could he apply to stay at ASFS (under the plan, our home would be zoned for Innovation)? I heard that APSVA has a policy that the school would guarantee a spot at the old school if a child were re-districted in their last year, but I can't find a reference. Do you know if this is a policy / where it might be described?

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4043

I greatly appreciate your very thoughtful response. It's wonderful that the school district is open to hearing concerns about these changes.

I did have a question for clarification of the student data. When you say that there are approximately 90 students in planning unit 13050, which grades does that cover? I assume that it is not just the rising fourth graders (who will be the first impacted by this change), as I know that we only have 10 such students. Even with the option and private school students, it wouldn't be anywhere close to 90. So I assume that the 90-student figure includes all the students in the planning unit from K-5, including the option and private school students?

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3982

Dear Administration,

We have been made aware of the potential change of the immersion program location from Gunston to Kenmore. As a Spanish speaking family, who loves Escuela Key we would continue the program if it stayed at Gunston. If the program changes to a Kenmore we WILL NOT continue with the program.

The location is challenging, no good transit options, bicycling or other is not safe on roads to that area.

Safety issues and student problems are of biggest concern as well. Kenmore is a much more dangerous school in light of the recent challenges with overdoses, guns and drug education paraphernalia plastered all over the school corridors.

By ignoring the participants that help elevate these immersion programs you do a disservice to the immigrant populations that want better schools and safer environments.

If this change occurs you will lose [redacted] girl to a different program.

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4044

Dear Planning and Evaluation,

Thank you for your message and for looking into this issue. I appreciate that this is a tough balance.

I would like to ask that you clarify the statement around the number of students in planning units 13050 and 13062. I have pasted the statement below:

*"Within these planning units, approximately 90 students from PU 13050 and approximately 40 students from PU 13062 would be re-assigned."*

What is your definition of "students from PU 13050"?

I live in 13050. I have [redacted] here. I have planned the [redacted] Neighborhood party for the last three years. It's very hard to understand that there are 90 students in a rising class. I don't believe that is correct. By my count there are 11 students in the rising 4th grade class (the class who would first be effected by these changes.) I might be off by a few students who go to an option school or a Private school, but know most of the families in this age-range, so I doubt I am off by 75.

Does your figure take into account students from K-12 in the PU?

If so, I am wondering how the Planning Committee decides what is "separation of small number" in the goal below:

"The aim is to minimize separation of small groups of students (25 or more) from their classmates when moving between school levels."

What is the definition of "classmates?" Does this mean other students in the grade-level? What is the basis of "between school levels?" Does this mean grade-level, or are you grouping all students in a school together? Are you saying that Middle School is a "school level" so you mean 6th-8th grades?

Thank you for your clarification. It would be very helpful to know how the planning committee is counting the number of students in a planning unit and using that data to further the goals they have set out.

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4129

Thank you for being transparent in presenting the analysis that APS staff examined when developing the recommendation to move the immersion program from Gunston to Kenmore.

In that Table 16 to Appendix I of the Pre-CIP Report does not account for the number of immersion students who reside in the assignment zone, but outside of the walk zone, for each middle school. Presumably, those students would be transported on "General Education" buses already traveling to the middle school, and not add to the total bus burden for immersion. This same concern applies to Table 15 and Charts 1 & 2 in the Appendices.

1. Can APS staff please update Tables 15 and 16 and Charts 1 & 2 to show how many projected immersion students are in the attendance zone, but outside of the walk zone for each middle school and update the expected # of immersion buses needed with immersion at each middle school?
2. Relatedly, the Transfer Report is only available for school years beginning in 2015-2019 on the [APS Enrollment statistics page](#). Can you please publish the transfer report for the 2020-21, 2021-

22 and 2022-23 school years? Can you please also publish or provide past transfer reports back to 2000, so we can see the past immersion enrollment?

3. During the June 29, 2023, School Board work session, APS staff (Renee Harbor) indicated that moving immersion to Kenmore would result in approximate 8 more bus routes, in total, because the hub stop buses would still need to run to Gunston to serve Montessori. However, Tables 15 & 16 in Appendix I of the Pre-CIP Report indicates a bus route savings if immersion is moved to Kenmore. What accounts for that discrepancy.
- 4.
5. In the Pre-CIP
6. Report, APS showed data regarding immersion students who live proximate to certain ART bus routes that serve APS middle schools. The APS student Free Fare Program is set to expand to WMATA buses this year. Did APS do an analysis similar to Table 14 in Appendix
7. I, but for WMATA bus service? This applies to pages A-144 through A-148 as well.
- 8.

I would be happy to meet to discuss any of these questions.

Thank you for your time and your prompt response.

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4127

Dear staff,

I will be happy with any outcome, including wherever you place option schools. Relieving over crowding is very important. I assume it is hard to balance walking areas and buses and options and, and, and. Good luck and godspeed.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Gunston Immersion Parent

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4131

I recommend that planning units 23220, 23230, and 46093 be split along N Quincy St. I also recommend that 14030 be split along Patrick Henry.

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4043

Thanks so much for the response. I greatly appreciate your engagement on this.



I do hope that you will consider my respectful but serious objections to how you are analyzing this data. Most importantly, I do not think it is fair to consider only the 50-student number when assessing how many of their Ashlawn classmates will be attending Kenmore with them. As you know, sixth grade at Kenmore is largely separate from seventh and eighth grades, so the more appropriate comparison is the number of students in their grade with whom they have attended Ashlawn. Our neighborhood is quite certain that there are 10 Ashlawn students in our planning unit who are rising fourth graders (there are some private school students who I understand you are including to get a slightly higher number). For the sake of argument, let's assume that a few of those private school students switch to public middle school and go to Kenmore. That would mean that the students from our planning unit will have known approximately 3 percent of the students in Kenmore's roughly 350-student sixth-grade class. To put it another way, they will know approximately 1 percent of Kenmore's entire student body. I question how many other sixth-graders in the entire school district go into middle school knowing so few of their classmates.

I appreciate your observation that the students are reunited with many of their Ashlawn classmates once they get to high school, but I do hope that you consider the disruption caused by tearing them away from those classmates for three years. While in an ideal world, they will maintain their relationships with their former Ashlawn classmates throughout middle school, the reality is that they will be among the small percentage of Ashlawn students who are isolated from their friends for three years. While I am encouraged by your consideration of their high school experience, I cannot overemphasize what a cruel fate this is to impose on a small fraction of the Ashlawn population.

Thank you again for your engagement, and I look forward to further discussions.

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4144

Please prioritize keeping children with their elementary school classmates when revising the middle school boundaries. Friendships are vitally important for children's happiness and emotional well-being, particularly in the middle school years. I had the unfortunate experience of attending one middle school while most of my elementary school classmates and all my close friends went to another middle school. It was difficult and had a significant negative effect on my happiness and interest in school as a sixth grader.

Arlington's current school boundaries, unfortunately, may set my children up for a similar experience, unnecessarily separating them from most of their friends at a difficult time in many kids' lives. We live in Planning Unit 16050, and our kids go or will go to Tuckahoe Elementary. Most of their Tuckahoe classmates will go to Williamsburg Middle. But our planning unit is assigned to Swanson Middle. Please reassign our planning unit and the other Tuckahoe-Swanson units to Williamsburg. It would benefit APS because Williamsburg is projected as the middle school with the most spare capacity. Alternatively, you could switch all the Tuckahoe-Williamsburg planning units to Swanson and assign other kids to Williamsburg (for example, Nottingham has the same problem of sending kids to two different middle schools). Whatever approach you take, please do whatever you can to make each elementary school only feed into one middle school. It really can have a big positive effect on kids' happiness.

4156

I have received your Middle School Boundary announcement. Can you please provide a decipherable map, that shows street names, with the proposed new boundaries? The maps on your website do not have any street names.

Thank you

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4166

Hello,

I read through the pre-CIP report and was disappointed to see that my planning unit (16050) is proposed to move from Swanson to Williamsburg. I was looking forward to letting my kids walk to middle school and not be forced to catch a bus every morning and afternoon.

Planning units 16050 and 16060 already have targeted transfers to Cardinal Elementary and I'm sure APS would like to shift them completely inside the Cardinal boundary during the next elementary school boundary process, since they are inside the Cardinal walk zone.

I think it makes sense to keep these two planning units aligned to Swanson, to match the rest of the PUs assigned to Cardinal, and to maximize the number of students who can walk to middle school.

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4213

Good morning!

This message is in response to the emails sent June 29 (to Gunston Immersion parents) and June 30 (to Key and Claremont parents) regarding the proposed move of the Middle School Immersion Program from Gunston to Kenmore.

Firstly, we acknowledge the fact that we all want what's best for APS' Dual Language Immersion Program. As the PTA Presidents at Claremont, Key, and Gunston, our objective is to facilitate an effective, efficient process of discourse between APS and our school communities.

**As elected representatives of our respective communities, we are asking to be connected with a representative from Planning and Evaluation who can work with us as a liaison between APS and the school communities.** Building this partnership will serve to bridge communications between APS and our communities and our hope is that this person will be able to answer questions from our communities.

In an effort to start this partnership and process of collaboration, we ask that the representative from P&E meet with the three of us (in person or virtually) to:

- Go through an initial set of questions that have been brought forth from our communities (see attached). There has been discourse within the community on many of the questions; however, we would also like to understand APS' response to these questions so that we can accurately communicate APS' decision making process.

- Discuss how to best deliver the responses to our communities.
- Establish a timeline for information sharing and engagement opportunities regarding this topic. We were pleased with the announcement yesterday that there will be an engagement session on September 5. We'd like to meet to discuss how we can help make this session as productive as possible for everyone, and what additional opportunities exist for future input and information sharing.

By working together, we hope to form a more amicable and productive collaboration with APS P&E, which will benefit all parties in the months and years to come. Thank you for your time; we look forward to your response.

[attachment]

QUESTIONS FROM IMMERSION PARENTS RE: PROPOSED MOVE

FROM GUNSTON TO KENMORE /

*PREGUNTAS DE LOS PADRES DE INMERSIÓN SOBRE: PROPUESTA DE MUDANZA DE GUNSTON A KENMORE*

1. What data did APS Planning review regarding the residence of current Gunston Immersion students to evaluate how this would change commute/bus ride times?
2. What will this mean Gunston teachers who teach both Spanish immersion and English language sections of classes? Will they stay at Gunston or move to Kenmore? Will they be given a choice or transferred?
3. Where can we find the “transfer report” for recent years? [This webpage](#) has transfer reports through Spring 2020, but not more recent.
4. What alternatives were considered to moving the immersion program (at all) that would also balance campuses? Why were they rejected in favor of moving the immersion program?
5. What alternatives were considered to moving the immersion program to Kenmore? Why were they rejected in favor of moving the immersion program to Kenmore?
6. What percentage of non-immersion Gunston students come from Spanish-speaking homes? What is the percentage for Kenmore students? How would the move of a large bilingual population affect student life in each school?
7. Given the success of the immersion program, as indicated by increasing enrollments and the popularity of Claremont and Key schools, has the district considered other ways to add capacity to immersion programs through opening additional campuses, rather than moving the Gunston program? This alternative is mentioned on page A-132 of the Pre-CIP Report, but it seems no analysis was done.

- a. The maps indicate that the proposed boundaries for a split middle school immersion program would be different than the boundaries for elementary school immersion. Presumably, this would mean a small number of children would progress from Claremont to Hamm, while the large majority of Claremont students would progress to Gunston. Similarly, a small number of Key students would progress from Key to Gunston, while the large majority of Key students progress to Hamm. Why was the boundary drawn to force that movement?
8. There are numerous studies that show [changes like this](#) cause negative social, emotional, and educational impacts to kids. In APS' decision making for this or other schools, how are these large school changes weighed and tracked, specifically?
  - a. Related, how did APS conceptualize the overlap between immersion and non-immersion populations (e.g., immersion students with academic relationships and friendships with students in non-immersion classes)? What data did they use in this evaluation? Did APS consider the effects of disrupting these relationships during middle school? And if so how were the costs measured and weighed against the benefits?
  - b. Additionally, are you tracking how many of the same populations you are impacting with these decisions? For example, you moved large populations from Old Key to a New Key school and now again mid-middle school from Gunston to Kenmore. Current children starting Gunston this year would have 3 different schools in 3 years ('24-'25 Gunston, '25-'26 at Kenmore, '26-'27 High School TBD).
9. Kenmore's location is notoriously challenging from a transportation perspective. What would APS do to facilitate transportation for a choice program at Kenmore? How would children be able to access the school on foot or by bike? Would APS work with Arlington County to expand the transit connectivity to Kenmore to serve more of the County? Would APS work with Arlington County to fast track connections to the W&OD trail along Carlin Springs Drive?
10. How would this move impact immersion enrollment and attrition? What data has APS staff relied on? Who has APS staff engaged with about this move? What percentage of current Gunston, Claremont and Key populations are within the walk zone of Kenmore?
11. Is APS going to simultaneously engage on moving the immersion program and on a MS boundary process that assumes immersion moves to Kenmore? If so, how does that not make moving the program a foregone conclusion, in violation of School Board policy and state law?
12. What would be the transportation, capacity, instructional and enrollment impacts of establishing a second immersion middle school program at Dorothy Hamm MS?
13. Given the rationale for this proposed move is to provide a central location for secondary immersion, are there also plans to move the high school immersion site from Wakefield?
14. How is "centrally located" defined by APS? Both Gunston and Kenmore are less than a half mile from the school district boundaries. Is there a technical definition that APS has developed for "centrally located?" If so, what is it? Is it weighted by attendance/population or just geography?

By this definition, what other options schools and programs are or are not considered centrally located?

15. Dena Gollopp is the head of immersion at Gunston. Is she on the visioning committee that is proposing this move? Is she in favor or against, and why?
16. Given the transportation efficiencies of co-locating choice programs, the transportation efficiencies of having choice programs centrally located, and the need to find a permanent home for MPSA, has APS considered finding a home for immersion & Montessori MSs in a central location? Could the large, centrally located campus at Escuela Key provide this home?
17. Was Jefferson evaluated as an option? It is more central than both Kenmore and Gunston, and the IB program is complementary to DLI.
18. 18. In the Pre-CIP Report, APS showed data regarding immersion students who live proximate to certain ART bus routes that serve APS middle schools. The APS student Free Fare Program is set to expand to WMATA buses this year. Did APS do an analysis similar to Table 14 in Appendix I, but for WMATA bus service? Applies to pages A-144 through A-148 as well.
19. During the June 29, 2023, School Board work session, APS staff (Renee Harbor) indicated that moving immersion to Kenmore would result in approximate 8 more bus routes, in total, because the hub stop buses would still need to run to Gunston to serve Montessori. However, Table 15 in Appendix I of the Pre-CIP Report indicates a bus route savings if immersion is moved to Kenmore. What accounts for that discrepancy?
20. In Table 16 to Appendix I of the Pre-CIP Report, it seems APS did not account for the number of immersion students who reside in the assignment zone for the middle school in question. Presumably, those students would not add to the total bus burden for immersion at any middle school (because buses would run to those stops regardless). Can APS include that aspect in their analysis? This same concern applies to Charts 1 & 2 in the Appendices.
21. General questions about the analysis in the Pre-CIP Report Appendix I - do the projected attendance numbers take into account proximity of students to a MS location? I.e. some students do not continue with immersion because of its location at Gunston and if the program were to move, some of those students would stick with the program (while others, who live closer to Gunston, may not).

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4211

Dear APS School Board,

I live in Planning Unit: **13061**. According to the Pre-CIP report we are slated to have our middle school changed from Kenmore to Swanson. **PLEASE MOVE US!** Currently, Ashlawn Elementary School is divided between Swanson and Kenmore. Then the kids who go to Kenmore are divided between W+L and Yorktown. It really makes no sense. By moving Ashlawn to Swanson, you keep a lot of the current Kenmore to W+L kids together with many of their elementary schoolmates who are also going to W+L, but go to Swanson for middle school. I also would like to say that I have no issues with my kids riding the

bus to Swanson, since we'll now be outside the walk zone. I would also urge you to consider moving all of Ashlawn to Swanson. The Pre-CIP keeps our neighbors across [redacted] planning unit in Kenmore. There's only about 135 kids who would be impacted and they'd be divided from not only their friends but also their neighbors. We chose a neighborhood school for a reason to keep our kids together with neighbors. Please don't divide us.

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4208

Good afternoon;

Wondering if the sessions, specifically 2023 Middle School Boundary Process, and the relocation of the Spanish Immersion Program to Kenmore from Gunston will be in multiple languages in the virtual and in person sessions. That information is missing in the below message.

Thank you

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4156

Thank you for the more decipherable map. Can you let me know what the timeframe is for citizens to weigh in on the boundary proposal? Your chart lists September 1 as "Closing date for Feedback Details in the M.S. Boundary Proposal" but later says "Oct/Nov TBD" for "Community Engagement." If citizens want to express their views on the middle school boundary changes, what is the deadline?

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4156

I received a phone call yesterday from your staff person who said they will forward my email and someone will respond. I am writing to request an update on my questions below. Thank you.

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4249

I would like to request that the MS boundary planning process include the 40 houses that will be completed by the time the changes go in effect. The last process meeting that I attended a few years back said that the process had changed so that new builds would be accounted for in the planning process. This was when the townhouses were being built near Westover, significantly increasing the size of families in that area because it went from 2 beds to 4-5 beds. I am a little confused as to why the Grove At Dominion Hills, Wilson/Patrick Henry Dr, is a single house going to 40 houses, would not be included in the planning process.

Thank you

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4248

Your planning maps do not account for the largest planned development of new homes in Arlington in literally decades.

The Toll Brothers development of 3 dozen new homes in the area bordered by McKinley Rd, Wilson Blvd and N Madison Street, each with at least 5BR, in the Cardinal/Swanson/Yorktown district will place an additional tremendous burden on those schools.

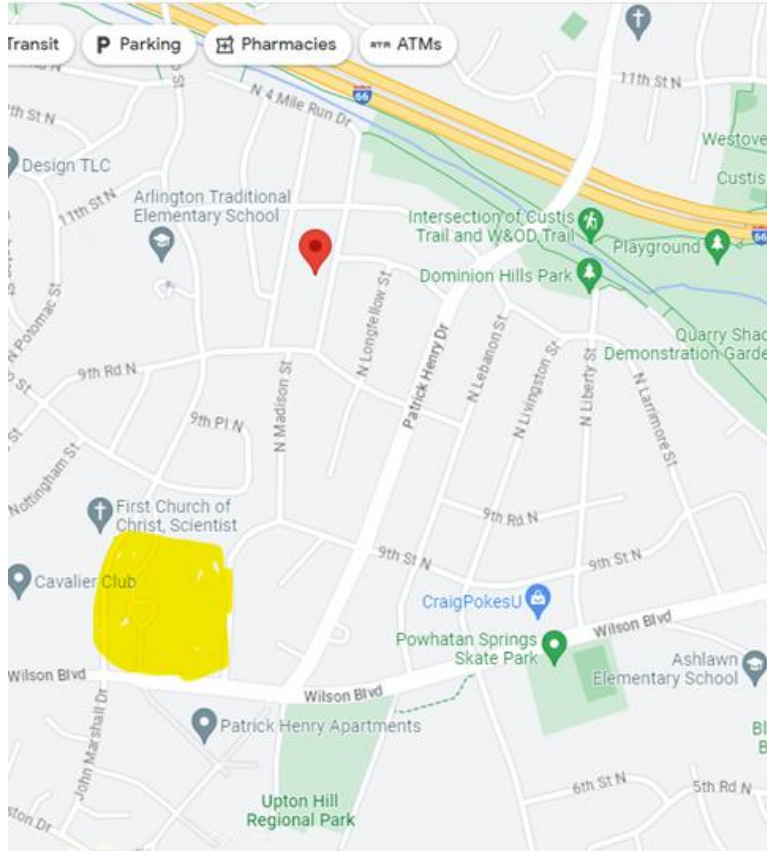
They won't be ready for occupancy until 2024 according to their advertisements but APS MUST factor them into any boundary decisions. To ignore them as they come online would be foolhardy, yet I don't see any reference to them in the data on the MS Boundary website or supporting documents.

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4257

APS School Board and APS Staff -

Please take note that a new housing development is currently under construction and will deliver later this year at the intersection of McKinley Road and Wilson Blvd (highlighted below). Toll Brothers is building 40+ homes (5 bedroom homes) on this land. This land is in Planning Unit 14030 and those houses are not currently accounted for in the PU data that is posted to APS' website. You should also make sure to take those homes into account when determining if any Nottingham students would be rezoned to Cardinal as this PU 14030 feeds to Cardinal Elementary.



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4258

Hello- I am writing regarding the APS upcoming MS boundary adjustments to go into effect in 2025-26.

I reviewed the initial data tables and noted that these do not at all reference the three dozen houses being built in the Dominion Hills neighborhood. These are large houses that are designed for families. Not accounting for this growth in some way in the planning process underway now would be short sighted as these houses impact the student population in our zoned area. This is not one house but 3 dozen!

I urge you to include those houses in your middle school planning since they will be occupied by the time the boundary changes go into effect.

Thank you very much for your attention. And consideration of this issue.

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4263

Good morning,

I live in PU 14030 and I did not see a housing development under construction in my PU in the two excel data sets that were provided for the MS Boundary Update effort. There are 40 homes that will be



constructed (a number of which are currently near completion) in a new development called The Grove at Dominion Hills, which is located on the property bounded by Wilson Blvd, McKinley Dr, and Madison St. From the developer's website, these 40 homes will average 5 bedrooms each:

<https://www.tollbrothers.com/luxury-homes-for-sale/Virginia/The-Grove-at-Dominion-Hills>

Let me know if you need any additional information.

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4050

Hi Planning and Evaluation,

I appreciate your detailed response and the time and energy going into this comprehensive assessment. I'm writing again because I'm really concerned about my children having to create new friendships at such a critical juncture in their development, and I appreciate APS valuing alignment for this reason. I wanted to flag a couple additional ideas for your consideration

1. Ashlawn is one of only three elementary schools in the County that are divided unevenly for middle school (the other two being Barcroft and Barrett). However, for those two schools, the entire elementary school joins back together for high school. Ashlawn, however, does not - it is again split between two different schools. It seems unfair that Ashlawn is the only elementary school in the County that is split for middle and high school. I am writing to ask that Planning and Evaluation consider the full trajectory of schools in their alignment calculations (and the fact that only Ashlawn elementary is split disproportionately for middle school, and does not rejoin for high school).

2. Barrett PUs 12030 and 12031 currently go to Kenmore but are being moved to Swanson in the immersion proposal. APS could switch the middle school assignment for these two PUs with Ashlawn's 13050 and 13062 (i.e. 13050 and 13062 go to Swanson and 12030 and 12031 remain at Kenmore) thereby making Barrett more evenly split between Swanson and Kenmore, and not having Ashlawn be so disproportionately split.

On the data:

- I understand that 130 students would be reassigned, but those students do not all attend Ashlawn. Many attend option schools and others attend private schools, so the number for alignment purposes, meaning the ability for children to have established friendships, is far less. I understand counting the total possible students for capacity reasons, but I wonder if Planning and Evaluation would be receptive to detailed data on the actual number that attend Ashlawn because I think it would demonstrate that it is a much smaller number.

- Given that 6th grade is entirely separate from 7th and 8th grades at Kenmore, it doesn't make sense to consider the total number from the grades in the alignment process.

- The class BELOW the rising 4th graders (the rising 3rd graders) have far fewer students, and again, many of these attend option schools and private schools. Is the data on their year and size factored into Planning and Evaluation's consideration?

Thank you for your consideration, your time, and your work. I look forward to speaking with you on Monday night!

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4289

Good morning,

I have reviewed the tables on your website related to housing development. It does not appear to account for the recent permits granted for the so-called "Missing Middle" initiative and permits granted thus far in 2023 for multiplex housing, since none of the "net new units" number coincide with what is permitted.

Determining the exact number this year, and then projecting, based on the maximum number the County has decided to grant in the future, would require extensive research and forecasting, that your team would be in a better position to determine, than individuals contacting the County's permitting offices.

Many thanks for considering the above suggestion.

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4283

Hello,

I live in Planning Unit 14030 in the Dominion Hills neighborhood. Please add the new 40 single family homes from the Toll Brothers' development (<https://www.tollbrothers.com/luxury-homes-for-sale/Virginia/The-Grove-at-Dominion-Hills>) to your housing unit forecast data. These are mostly 5 bedroom homes and will likely add quite a few students to the planning unit.

Thank you

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4287

Good morning,

I am writing about the Planning Unit Data Review concerning "Housing Unit Forecast." From my review of the tables, the new development of 40 single family houses called "The Grove" in the Dominion Hills neighborhood of Arlington: <https://www.tollbrothers.com/luxury-homes-for-sale/Virginia/The-Grove-at-Dominion-Hills> is not accounted for on your planning sheets.

Of particular interest, the developer's website mentions the following, which may not be accurate, given the current enrollment figures for the referenced schools:

**Public education will be available through the highly-rated Arlington County Schools – students will attend Cardinal Elementary School, Swanson Middle School, and Yorktown High School**

4292

Hello Planning Committee and School Board,

I'm writing about the MS boundary change process. I'm a mom of [redacted] from Ashlawn, one who starts at Kenmore [redacted].

I understand that as Arlington's population changes and shifts, there is a need to redraw boundaries, and as is illustrated in the data provided in your proposal this is a complex process.

However, in the recommended option, PU 13050 is one of just 2 out of 17 Ashlawn PUs that does not go to Swanson. I am writing to ask that PU 13050 stays with its other Ashlawn (and neighborhood!) PUs and that the planning committee reconsider their recommendation to isolate only 2 of 17 planning units for middle school. Please consider either sending these planning units to Swanson or send a more reasonable distribution of students from Ashlawn to Swanson and Kenmore.

We know that alignment is important for fostering peer relationships and that with the current youth mental health crisis and social isolation, encouraging and supporting peer relationships, especially among middle school age youth is critical.

Did you know that after middle school, students in PU 13050 are again in the minority because they leave Kenmore for W&L while most of their peers go to Wakefield? By continuing to break this small group of students from the larger group to a new school in both MS and HS, you ask these students to start over on friendships twice, meanwhile many other children in the county stay with their elementary friends from Elementary to MS to HS. This is not an equitable experience and not aligned with best practice for supporting healthy adolescent development.

Please align PU 13050 with their Ashlawn peers in a more meaningful way.

Thank you for listening. I appreciate everything you do for our county.

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4334

Dear APS,

It is confusing why the Spanish relocation and middle school boundaries are separate issues -- they are coupled. The current plan to essentially eliminate many walk zones for our middle schools by busing them to a distant middle school is driven by moving immersion and the resulting dominos.

It seems much more likely that moving immersion to the lowest capacity schools and minimizing boundary adjustments and maximizing walkzones would represent the greatest value for the school and least disruption.

Given that, I strongly oppose the move for many PU in the DHMS walkzone being migrated to Williamsburg. It disrupts neighborhoods, waste students time on unnecessary bus rides, and expends money and resources APS can ill afford.

4325

Good afternoon to whom it may concerns,

My family and I have been reading through the proposed changes for middle school boundaries and are concerned with the possible percentage splits of Ashlawn Elementary students to Swanson and Kenmore.

It looks as if almost 100% of Ashlawn will possibly attend Swanson with the exception of two small planning units....13062 and 13050.

I do not think it is right to leave out these two small units of a few streets, while rest of our neighbors/friends/Ashlawn family go to Swanson.

While making new friends is important, middle school is also a big transition and a sensitive age. I am certain that my children (and others) will go alone to Kenmore with every single one of friends going to Swanson.

Furthermore, this change is shifting many of the children who would be walking to Kenmore to attending Swanson. This leaves the kids in these 2 units (who are all walkers) with few to no friends with whom to walk to school. Walking buddies are important for safety and part of the middle school/walking experience. Losing most everyone to another middle school plus a walking group makes this shift even more difficult.

Please consider allowing 13062 and 13050 join the rest of Ashlawn (and their close neighbors and friends) to attend Swanson.

I am eager to hear your thoughts.

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4347

Hi there,

Thank you so much for hosting the virtual meeting last night on the middle school boundary changes. I think **moving the immersion program to Kenmore will help alleviate a lot of the overcrowding issues at Gunston and is a smart decision.** In fact, almost all of the proposed moves on the middle school boundary changes make sense to balance out the numbers! However, **I write out of concern for our particular planning unit, PU 13050.**

I have a rising [redacted]. Our son in particular has the vast majority of his friends (all from Ashlawn) in the [redacted] neighborhood, and splitting him up from them would be absolutely devastating as he begins middle school, which is a notoriously difficult time for all kids! I believe there are roughly 10-11 rising Ashlawn 4th graders in PU 13050, and it is incredibly unfair and inequitable to have them split off from their peers to go to Kenmore while the rest of the school (save for PU 13062) goes to Swanson.

Under the current proposal, **PU 13050 and 13062 are on an island in the whole county** - their elementary school community splits off twice - first between Swanson and Kenmore, and then again between W&L and Yorktown for high school. This happens to no other school or PUs in APS!

While three elementary schools (Ashlawn, Barrett, Barcroft) are disproportionately split between middle schools, Ashlawn's is the most severe (2 of 17 total PUs as opposed to 2 of 13 for the other schools), and Ashlawn is the only of those three schools that splits again for HS (all of Barcroft goes to Wakefield, and all of Barrett goes to W&L) - in other words, all of Barrett and Barcroft rejoin again for HS, but that is not the case with kids in Ashlawn. **This is incredibly inequitable to the kids who live in PUs 13050 and 13062!**

**One simple solution** to this could be to swap out PUs 12030 and 12031 (Barrett) and PUs 13050 and 13062 (Ashlawn). Barrett PUs 12030 and 12031 already go to Kenmore, but under the current proposal they go to Swanson. **If PUs 12030 and 12031 stay at Kenmore, but you instead send PUs 13050 and 13062 to Swanson, then that has four benefits:** 1) all of Ashlawn goes to Swanson, and the double MS and HS split is eliminated, not just for Ashlawn but for the entire county (this is huge for mental health reasons); 2) the disproportionality of Barrett kids to middle school becomes much more even (4 PUs to Kenmore and 9 to Swanson, instead of 2 and 11); 3) PUs 12030 and 12031 won't move under this scenario; and 4) the map is just much more contiguous and makes more sense.

I can't even imagine all of the time and effort that goes into these proposals - and that's before you have to deal with the angry parents! Good luck with all of the decisions in the weeks ahead. I think you guys are 99% of the way to where you need to be - the PU swap described above is a simple solution with many benefits that helps keep clusters of kids together during the challenging middle school years.

Thank you for your consideration.

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4368

Hi there,

My name is [redacted] and I have a [redacted] at Kenmore, and a [redacted] at Ashlawn. I live in [redacted], and am part of planning unit 13050.

I'm writing to voice my strong concern at the proposed new middle school boundaries that were included in the pre-CIP report, as a potential solution to moving the Spanish Immersion program from Gunston to Kenmore. The proposed boundaries have only two of Ashlawn's 17 planning units remaining at Kenmore. The other 15 will go to Swanson in the new proposal. This means a very small number of kids will be isolated from their peers at a new middle school and then \*again\* when they move to HS. (Our PU goes to W-L; 87% of Kenmore will go to Wakefield.)

I fully understand the complexities that go into an exercise like this, and know that you're balancing lots of competing needs. My ask is that you review the specifics of the new boundaries you're proposing and reconsider how you're splitting Ashlawn Elementary. Isolating such a small group of students from their friends and neighbors goes against the "Alignment" tenet of the guidelines you use to look at boundaries.

I did attend the virtual event last night to provide input on the pre-CIP report, and plan on joining the others as well. This is a very big cause for concern within our school community so I appreciate your attention and additional reviews.

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4379

First, thank you for your efforts in trying to balance enrollment and access to middle school across the community. I understand it isn't easy.

Has the committee considered the significant impact of more than one boundary change on a school community within a short window? I know it feels significant to the Taylor community though understand it will not be the only school affected by two boundary shifts.

I wish to also share the incredibly positive emotional changes my older son experienced when he started middle school at Dorothy Hamm and was able to walk 5 minutes to school. The fresh air and autonomy both in the morning and afternoon helped his quality of life more than expected. I predict that same experience will benefit my younger son as well. We are on Lorcom Lane in planning unit 23090. It feels counter to the walkability efforts of Arlington County to decide that students on one side of Lorcom Lane can continue to walk less than three blocks to Hamm while the students directly across the street must ride a bus to a school more than 2 miles away.

Thanks for your consideration

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4061

Mr. Goldstein,

First, I want to thank you for reading and responding to my previous email. In my experience, that is all too rare for an elected official, and I am very grateful for that.

I attended the virtual community meeting this evening, along with many of my neighbors, and I left with the feeling that the staff did not really hear our concerns. As I had explained in my earlier email, the staff's proposal is to end the roughly 50/50 split of Ashlawn between Kenmore and Swanson, and move all but two of the 17 planning units to Swanson. Our planning unit (13050), which has about 10 fourth graders in Ashlawn, is one of the two that will remain in Kenmore. This means that my [redacted] will have been to elementary school with approximately 3 percent of the Kenmore sixth grade class. In the grade behind [redacted], there are even fewer students in our planning unit -- approximately three or four.

The staff's response to our concerns was underwhelming. One staff member said that she wanted to many students together as possible, but that because we are in central Arlington, it is unlikely that all of the Ashlawn students will end up at the same middle school. What many of us attempted to explain in the Q&A chat was that the problem is that they are moving the vast majority - but not all -- of the students. Minimizing the number of students who are left at Kenmore means that they will be even more isolated. "You're in central Arlington so your child will be separated from the vast majority of her elementary school friends" is not really a satisfactory answer.

It also seems like the school district staff is working with inflated numbers. In my interactions with them, they have said that 90 students in our planning unit would stay together, but that is counting all students

-- including those in private and option schools -- from K-8 in our planning unit. When pushed, the staff says that 50 students will be together. That also is inflated, as it includes all students in grades 6-8, public and private, and Kenmore separates sixth graders from the older students. A number of us asked in the chat to have a meeting with the staff to explain our concerns, but did not get a response.

At this point, it does not seem like the staff is terribly interested in addressing the isolation of a small number of students in our planning unit. I hope that I'm wrong, but I also realize that this process is moving very quickly. So I'm hoping that the school board can help us out.

Please let me know if you need additional information, or if you have any suggestions for how we can advocate for our children. I have never been involved with school issues before, but this is too important to the children in our neighborhood.

---

4050

Hello!

Thank you so much for responding and for explaining the need to balance costs and alignment and the emotional needs of children.

I wanted to point out that two Ashlawn PUs that are walkable to Kenmore (13060 and 13061) are scheduled to move to Swanson and **they are FURTHER from Swanson than** our Planning Units are (13050 and 13062). Both of those PUs (13060 and 13061) are part of our Ashlawn bus and community so it's surprising they are being split, and particularly with the ones FURTHER from Swanson being chosen to go to Swanson, given that the cost of transportation is a factor and all four PUs are walkable to Kenmore.

I appreciate you passing along the concerns of our two PUs (13050 and 13062) with an eye towards the only eleven fourth graders that attend Ashlawn from these PUs that will enter sixth grade at Kenmore together (given that many students attend option schools and private schools). 11 is a very very small number of children per grade level. I might sound like a crazy parent :), but I'm just worried about my child starting a critical educational and development stage without any connections.

I know you're balancing an entire school system's worth of kids. Thanks again - and thanks for the helpful and thorough presentation on Monday night!

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4156

I was able to find the link to the July 31 session on a different website.

Can you let me know - below you say the September 5 session is for the boundary proposal and immersion school move. But the website says the September 5 session is only for the immersion proposal. Can you tell me which of these is accurate?

4424

Thanks so much. I greatly appreciate the engagement. Many families in our neighborhood have reviewed the spreadsheet data for our planning unit, and we want to emphasize that the numbers capture many students who do not attend Ashlawn, either they attend a private school or ATS. This has been the subject of a great deal of discussion in our neighborhood, and we're certain that there are 11 rising fourth graders (not 19 as the spreadsheet suggests) and four rising third graders (not the eight that are in the spreadsheet). If it would be helpful, I could try to gather data for you about rising first and second graders, but I have less insight into that because I only have a rising fourth grader. The bottom line is that when we consider the impact of isolating students, the numbers in the spreadsheet, at least for our planning unit, are inflated.

In terms of suggestions: under the APS proposal, planning units 12030 and 12031 would move from Kenmore to Swanson. As with the proposal for Ashlawn, this results in an even more lopsided isolation of just a few remaining Barrett planning units in Kenmore. If those Barrett planning units stayed in Kenmore, and the Ashlawn planning units 13050 and 13062 went to Swanson, then you would have: (1) all the Ashlawn planning units in Swanson; and (2) a more even division of Barrett between Swanson and Kenmore, rather than isolating a handful of remaining Barrett students at Kenmore. This would ensure that the greatest number of APS students at both Ashlawn and Barrett are in middle school with their elementary classmates.

Let me know if you need more information or would like to discuss.

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4325

I very much appreciate your taking the time to write this quick response.

I do understand that APS is trying to balance out middle school across the county.

I am very hopeful that a count of the actual number of student in these 2 small PU's that are being separated from Ashlawn starting in 2025 is being taken into account— there are kids that go to private school and other options that would not be part of the count (?). Also, when it comes down to the number of kids per grade in 6th, 7th and 8th starting in this year...it is very few per grade. For example, our daughter is the only female we know of in her grade who will be going to Kenmore if this happens (the other is moving away—also to consider).

Middle school is a tough age for extreme social changes and isolation. Plus these kids have already been through that with Covid! Not only will this proposal create a very extreme split of Ashlawn, with almost the entire school going to Swanson, it breaks up our neighborhood.

You mentioned transportation, but won't the kids in our neighborhood who are being moved from Kenmore to Swanson be bus riders? Could we not just walk the quick walk to those bus stops being provided for them?

I am concerned about the idea of my kids being walkers to Kenmore with most of the children in our neighborhood leaving for Swanson... walking groups especially in the early mornings are important for safety.



We would just appreciate so much a reconsideration for a number of reasons and it is a small number of students we are talking about. Thank you!!

I will plan to stay engaged as you suggested by visiting the webpage.

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4467

ONCE AGAIN APS is ignoring Arlington County parents who have vigorously supported walking over busing to schools. It is absolutely ridiculous that we are having this discussion AGAIN. In addition to the environmental impact, the strain on having kids wait for buses at 650 am and the additional stress on parents, arlington county is pretending that we have not had this discussion before.

I DO NOT support re-zoning Dorothy Hamm district which would remove walking as an option from so many families.

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4447

I've been following along with the recent CIPs and wanted to offer some feedback that I feel like has been overlooked in the movement of the Spanish Immersion program.

In moving this program, it creates a cascade of rezoning for middle schools. I understand that this needs to happen, and likely would have regardless of the immersion program move, but I don't feel like the zoning has been looked at very thoughtfully. For both Taylor and Ashlawn, these moves leave kids getting separated from their peers as they go into middle schools. This is really, really challenging, and I think APS should try to avoid it anywhere possible. I understand that lines have to be drawn somewhere, but it seems that not much thought has gone into tearing apart these communities.

As someone who will be affected by these separations, I also ask that you please take this into account when you are doing further boundary changes down the road. There has been so much upheaval for kids already the last few years.

I also have a very hard time understanding why these option programs continue to cause so many ripples through the neighborhood schools. I wish that APS would find a way to house these programs so that we are not continually having to move neighborhood schools around.

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4050

Hi!

Sorry for the multiple emails. I want to retract my last email because I realized I had incorrect information. I was reviewing the Pre-CIP document and noticed that PU 13060 and 13061 are walkable to **both Swanson and Kenmore**. I reviewed APS policies, and I think secondary walk zones are 1.5 miles. I took the furthest house in PU 13050, and it's 1.4 miles from Swanson. Does that make PU 13050 walkable to Swanson?

Also, does Bluemont trail and W&OD count for walkability? It's even closer than 1.4 miles if you use the trails

Thanks again for your time and help!

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4347

Dear Planning and Evaluation,

Thank you so much for your response, I know you are probably super inundated with emails and folks pushing their own views that counter all of the hard work that you've been doing over the past many months.

I wanted to respond to one thing in particular. Your response discusses transportation as one of the key factors in how you moved folks around. The good news is, **swapping PUs 13050 and 13062 and sending them to Swanson** (sending the WHOLE of Ashlawn to Swanson and not isolating these two PUs) **with PUs 12030 and 12031 by sending them to Kenmore** (and thus making Barrett more evenly split between Kenmore and Swanson than the proposal) **does not affect transportation costs because PUs 13050 and 13062 are within the walk zone (1.5 miles) of Swanson and would therefore not require any bus transportation.**

As noted in my initial email, **this very simple solution also solves the problem of ensuring PUs 13050 and 13062 are not double isolated** - under the current proposal they are the only two PUs in the entire county to go to an elementary school that has a split middle school AND a split high school (not to mention they would be the ONLY 2 PUs from Ashlawn going to Kenmore, further increasing the isolation in middle school and cutting against your concept of separating small groups of students). This is grossly inequitable - but also easily fixable! And done in a way that does not affect transportation issues since those two PUs are within the Swanson walking zone.

Thank you again for all of your hard work on this. I look forward to seeing the new proposal, and hope you all have been able to enjoy some of the summer amidst all of the parental comments.

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4544

Dear APS administrators,

We are parents of [redacted] at Taylor Elementary, and live in the current Dorothy Hamm walk zone. We appreciate the opportunity for parents and community members to engage in the current MS boundary process, and the multiple opportunities you are providing for input and discussion. We joined the July 29 Table Session and appreciate the work and thought you are putting into this.

Building on that discussion, we wanted to provide our input on the current pre-proposal in writing:

**We believe that APS should reconsider how it is weighing tradeoffs associated with the proposed boundary changes, in particular the recommendation to bus students in the Hamm walk zone to Williamsburg.**

Board policy B-2.1 regarding Boundaries establishes thoughtful considerations to guide boundary decisions. Without additional information to the contrary, we are concerned that the draft recommendation prioritizes a vague notion of the “Efficiency” consideration over a very concrete application of the “Proximity” consideration:

**De-emphasizing Proximity (walkability), after it was emphasized in 2017:**

The current proposal mandates that hundreds of students in the Hamm (and Swanson) walk zones who would otherwise walk to school in their neighborhood instead sign up for 1,000 or so bus rides to and from school during their middle school tenure. This includes students who, like us, live just a few blocks away from Hamm.

Others have expounded upon the health, social, developmental, environmental, and community benefits of more students walking to school, and you have stated that walkability was a priority in the 2017 MS boundary process. Yet the current proposal has diverged from this logic.

**Emphasizing Efficiency instead (though what this tangibly means is unclear):**

Given that APS projections suggest Hamm (and Swanson) would be within their capacity in 2027-28, there does not appear to be an "over-capacity" problem in this part of the county that creates the urgent need to act.

In our neighborhood, you might understand how this feels like solving a problem (at Hamm) that does not exist. But even if we look at the big picture - which we know you must - the tradeoff is unclear. We have not seen any information from APS to date that tangibly explains the cost savings or other benefits of increased capacity utilization at Williamsburg. It seems logical that schools with larger student populations, aligned with their physical capacity, can be more efficient. Yet, 650 students is not particularly small for a middle school (above the national average, per a cursory Google search).

This is an answerable question and we would not be surprised if you can show some efficiency benefit, perhaps even net of the increased transportation costs associated with more busing - but the question then becomes do the benefits of this proposal really outweigh the drawbacks for our children and community?

**In summary**, the current proposal seems to be trading off a very concrete, tangible cost of taking students away from their walkable neighborhood schools, with a vague benefit of making utilization percentages more equal, when there is not an over-capacity issue in this part of the county to solve. We recognize that sometimes population shifts in Arlington require changes to boundaries, including tradeoffs that some families will not like or prefer. However, based on our current understanding of the facts, it is unclear that that is the case in this situation.

**As a next step, we request APS to:**

- 1) Make the benefits of the current or any similar new proposal (e.g., efficiency at Williamsburg) much more clear**
- 2) Reconsider the tradeoffs between these benefits and busing students in walk zones away from their neighborhood schools**

Thank you for your diligence in this process, for sharing this input with the relevant administrators, and

for your collective consideration of this feedback. We would be happy to discuss it further should that ever be useful.

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4554

Hi Lisa,

Thanks so much for continuing to engage about the impact of the middle school boundary changes on the Ashlawn community. I am particularly grateful for your efforts to base the revised proposal on the number of students in our planning units who attend Ashlawn. Because we have many private and option school students, and some families have moved in and out of our neighborhood in the past year, many of us in Planning Units 13050 and 13062 collaborated for the past week to come up with what we believe is a comprehensive and current headcount of the number of students in both planning units who attend Ashlawn. We also developed an alternative proposal that both **reduces isolation district-wide** and **reduces APS transportation costs**.

*Tally of Planning Unit 13050 and 13062 Students Who Attend Ashlawn*

The tallies below are for the grades that the students are entering this month. We obtained this data through a collaborative effort among many families in both planning units that involved email groups, in-person meetings, and door-to-door canvassing, all in an effort to ensure that we have the most accurate headcount. The data includes students who have moved into the neighborhood in the past year, and excludes those who have moved out.

- Kindergarten
  - 13050: 4
  - 13062: 3
- First Grade
  - 13050: 5
  - 13062: 3
- Second Grade
  - 13050: 15
  - 13062: 3
- Third Grade
  - 13050: 6
  - 13062: 2
- Fourth Grade
  - 13050: 12
  - 13062: 3

As you can see, the number of students who actually attend Ashlawn is much smaller than the total headcounts that include option and private school students. Across the five grades, the average number of Ashlawn students in both planning units is 11 per year, with one grade having only seven Ashlawn students across both planning units. In other words, if those seven students are moved to Kenmore, they will have gone to elementary school with only 2 percent of the students in their grade.

### *Alternative Proposal*

I know that you are focusing on the numbers before getting into suggested changes to the boundary proposal, but I wanted to expand on what we had emailed about earlier, after discussion with many of my neighbors. We believe that our suggested change is in the best interests not only of our neighborhood, but APS as a whole, as it **reduces isolation district-wide** and **saves on transportation costs**. After a week of extensive discussions, I can say that many of the affected families believe that this is the best solution.

Under the pre-CIP plan, four Barrett planning units (12030, 12031, 12050, and 12070) would move from Kenmore to Swanson, leaving only two Barrett planning units (12010 and 12020) at Kenmore. Because I have not done a similar neighborhood headcount for Barrett, I don't know precisely how many Barrett students live in those two remaining Kenmore planning units. But even if we were to go by the larger number in the spreadsheet, those Barrett students would be extremely isolated at Kenmore. For instance, those two remaining planning units have only six rising fourth-graders, the first class to be impacted by this boundary change. Under the pre-CIP proposal, those six students (or even fewer) would be the only Barrett students in their grade of more than 300 at Kenmore.

The least disruptive solution to reduce isolation for both Ashlawn and Barrett students is to place all Ashlawn planning units at Swanson, and have something closer to a 50/50 split between Swanson and Kenmore for Barrett, rather than the lopsided distribution in the pre-CIP proposal. Because I don't have the exact numbers about your enrollment targets for both Kenmore and Swanson, I can suggest two possible solutions. First, you could simply maintain the status quo for Barrett students and keep 12030, 12031, 12050, and 12070 at Kenmore, along with 12010 and 12020. This would result in six Barrett planning units at Kenmore and seven at Swanson, with a roughly even split and minimizing isolation for Barrett students. Alternatively, if you need more Barrett students at Swanson than at Kenmore, you could keep at Kenmore only the two Barrett units closest to Kenmore (12030 and 12031), which would result in four Barrett planning units at Kenmore and nine at Swanson. In either scenario, the Barrett students who remain at Kenmore would know more of their classmates than under the pre-CIP plan.

Moreover, our proposal prevents the prospect of double-isolation for students in planning units 13050 and 13062, a prospect that few other APS students would face. Under the pre-CIP plan, these students would be isolated from their peers twice - first when they enter middle school, and again when they enter high school, as some go to Yorktown and others go to Washington-Liberty. Sending only a handful of them to Kenmore means that once they reach high school, they would lose most of the friends they made in middle school, as most of those friends would likely attend Wakefield. Keeping these Ashlawn students with their elementary classmates at middle school reduces the number of times they are isolated from their peers.

Of course, the other main consideration is transportation, and maximizing the number of students who can walk to school. Our proposal would be a **net benefit to APS from a transportation perspective**. The four Barrett planning units would take the bus to either Kenmore or Swanson, but they are much closer to Kenmore, so that would at least result in a shorter bus route for them. The two Ashlawn planning units that would move to Swanson are in the walk zones for both Kenmore and Swanson, so they would not increase the number of bus riders.

The transportation needs weigh in favor of solving the isolation problem by maintaining a 50/50 split of Barrett students at Kenmore and sending all Ashlawn students to Swanson, rather than vice versa. That is because Barrett planning units 12010 and 12020 are in the Kenmore walking zone. Moving them to Swanson would result in a shift of those planning units from walking to buses. In contrast, moving the two remaining Ashlawn planning units to Swanson would not result in additional bus riders, as those Ashlawn planning units are in the Swanson walk zone.

In short, our proposal would benefit not only Ashlawn students, but all students at Barrett, Kenmore, and Swanson, by increasing the likelihood that all students will know their classmates in middle school, and reducing the burden on the school district's transportation system. I hope this is helpful, and I'm happy to address any questions or concerns that you have.

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4612

Hi,

I have had [redacted] complete Williamsburg Middle School, [redacted]. My kids are friends with many of the kids who would be moved to WMS and would prefer to have their friends join them at the school. I know there is room at WMS and I'm happy to share it, however I think the planning is poorly formed.

I have a few reactions to the boundary adjustments:

1) No walkers in any part of Arlington from any school should be changed to busers. This especially applies to middle school since the start time is so early. My children's WMS bus comes at 6:50am for a 7:50am start and we only live 2miles away. The buses drop them off early to go do their high school runs. We drive our kids to WMS in a carpool with three other families. Our kids don't even wake-up until after the bus passes our house. I was on the school bell time committee. APS does not have extra buses or bus drivers. Moving walkers should be a non-starter. How is adding buses and drivers being a good steward of taxpayer dollars?

2) No one is discussing why WMS is under enrolled. Our kids have had excellent teachers at WMS. However, the leadership and special education department are extremely weak. Parents openly complain and joke about them. We live on a cul de sac with approximately 15 houses with at least five of those being empty nesters. Of the remaining houses, we have seven middle schoolers going to private school. All of them are former APS students! One family left during virtual school and plans to come back for high school, the rest left independent of covid decisions. WMS is showing APS that its middle school programming is weak and those that have the means are leaving. Fix the education rather than shuttling kids around.

3) APS staff is creating a "solution" to an issue that is not a real problem. The projections don't have Hamm overcrowded and barely have Swanson overcapacity. It is within a margin of error that the board for decades didn't even count as overcrowded. WMS was severely overcrowded before Hamm was built with the entire 8th grade in trailers, PE in trailers, bathrooms that were overcrowded and more side effects.

4) Neighborhoods and walking is huge in middle school! Even my kids that have bus service often walk with friends to their houses after school and then walk the rest of the way to our house. They finally

have independence. The Hamm kids often walk to Lee Heights after school and then walk home. The WMS kids often walk to Williamsburg Shopping Center or Lee-Harrison and then walk home. Many of the planning units APS is looking at moving could not walk home if you moved them to a new school.

The school board and staff should wait on moving kids from Hamm and Swanson to WMS and see how enrollment adjusts post-Covid decisions and Missing Middle Housing passing. They should evaluate how to attract neighborhood kids back to APS. If WMS still has space, it could be used as "swing space," for central offices, or outfitted for specialty programs. In no circumstances should it be used to bus walkers to a new school.

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4368

Thank you for hosting the roundtable last night at Kenmore on this topic. I was one of the (many!) Ashlawn parents who attended and I found it really helpful. As you are well aware, we're passionate about this but it does sound like the planning committee and staff are hearing our concerns and taking them into account for the actual proposals coming later this fall. So thank you for that.

I did have a question that I submitted on an index card last night that wasn't addressed, so I wanted to follow up with it here. One of the benefits of the proposal to move the Spanish Immersion to Kenmore is that more families/kids will stick with it through middle school. I imagine that means the ~350 kids moving from Gunston to Kenmore will eventually grow into a larger cohort. Won't that cause further overcrowding at Kenmore down the road? If so, I think that's even more of a reason to move the few orphaned Ashlawn planning units to Swanson with the rest of their classmates.

(Relatedly, this concerns me because my older daughter is [redacted] at Kenmore, meaning she would be [redacted] when the Immersion students join Kenmore. It sounds like there will be some crowding at school those first couple of years with the grandfathered 7th and 8th graders at Kenmore, and the new students coming in. I'm hopeful that your planning will accommodate that situation as best as possible so current Kenmore students can finish their time there.)

Thank you again for your responses and the time last night. I look forward to seeing the proposal(s) in October.

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4672

The proposal to send kids in the Donaldson Run neighborhood near Lorcom Lane by re-boundarying this area from Hamm and Williamsburg does not account for the health and well-being of these children.

We bought our home just north of Lorcom Lane so that our children could walk to Taylor AND Hamm -- we wanted the neighborhood school experience and we wanted to limit the time our children spent in cars or buses getting to and from school. This is particularly concerning with the bell schedule for middle school -- instead of our daughter being able to walk literally across the street to Hamm in 5 minutes, she would be required to either spend 10-12 minutes in the car getting to Williamsburg, or 30 minutes or more on the bus. This would force her to get up earlier than is healthy for middle school children. Not to mention that this proposal would just put more cars and buses (for which there is a driver shortage) on

the road. This move would reduce Hamm's walkable rate from 55% to 40%, and that 28% or so reduction would affect more than 100 students every year.

It also would make no sense practically. Hamm is not overcrowded. If Williamsburg is under-utilized, then \*offer\* but don't mandate that kids from overcrowded schools transfer to Williamsburg. Add incentives like immersion programs to encourage out-of-boundary interest in Williamsburg. And if the district is unwilling to offer incentives to encourage enrollment at Williamsburg, then it needs to reckon with whether it is reasonable to move kids from overcrowded schools to Williamsburg rather than moving kids who live right next to Hamm, which is not overcrowded, and then moving kids from overcrowded schools to Hamm.

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4716

Dear APS Staff,

I am a resident of Boulevard Manor (PU #13031) and a parent of [redacted] at Ashlawn Elementary. I have reviewed the data for our planning unit and believe it is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I would also like to take the opportunity to express support for the draft MS boundary changes, as they pertain to our neighborhood. I hope that the updated and official boundary proposal, to be unveiled in the fall, will move the Boulevard Manor planning units (13030-13032) into Swanson for the following reasons: alignment and transportation.

Alignment: There has been a lot of talk over the summer about Elementary to Middle School alignment. However, Middle School to High School alignment is just as important. Our neighborhood has been suffering in this regard ever since the last high school boundary changes, when our planning unit was moved from W-L to Yorktown. Boulevard Manor is currently the only neighborhood that goes from Kenmore to Yorktown. Consequently, our students have been matriculating at Yorktown with very few friends and have felt isolated and neglected, not only by their peers, but also by the Yorktown administrators and coaches, who regularly visit Swanson yet almost never reach out to Kenmore. Indeed, many of them seem to be unaware that Kenmore even feeds into their school! The situation is so dispiriting that many parents in our neighborhood have gone out of their way to seek administrative transfers to W-L. I know that APS planning staff are aware of this situation; Lisa even mentioned Boulevard Manor by name at the first virtual town hall this summer.

Moving our neighborhood to Swanson would solve these problems immediately and align us more solidly with Yorktown. By attending middle school with a large percentage of their freshman class, our students will feel they belong at Yorktown. We are grateful to APS staff for listening to our complaints and addressing them in this middle school boundary proposal!

Transportation: Boulevard Manor is currently eligible for bus transportation to Kenmore. Presumably, this will be the case for Swanson as well. The boundary change would therefore have a neutral impact on the school district's bus demand, which I know is a concern of APS staff. Unlike many other neighborhoods potentially slated for a boundary change, ours would NOT be going from a walk zone to bus. If anything, our move to Swanson would help alleviate the congestion at Kenmore by reducing by one the number of buses going to that school, a number that will increase dramatically because of the county-wide immersion program.



In sum, APS should move Boulevard Manor (planning units 13030-13032) to Swanson in order to a.) resolve a longstanding alignment problem, and b.) modestly alleviate the transportation burden on Carlin Springs Blvd.

Unfortunately, the loudest voices in these contentious boundary changes are the ones in opposition. Voices in support are often drowned out. My hope is that, while listening to and addressing the concerns of some of our adjacent neighborhoods, you will not forget about us.

Thank you for considering this advice.

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4682

Why would an entire community of parents without exception be outraged by the proposed middle school boundary changes? Because the proposal is so stunningly obtuse to the best interest of the students who would be affected.

Count me as one of the hundreds of parents who is thoroughly **opposed** to the middle school boundary proposal.

It is mystifying what could be in the best interest of my student with the proposed changes. With the current boundary definitions, our student would be a less than five minute walk from middle school. Under the proposed changes, my student would be a 15 minute drive or 30 minute+ bus ride from middle school.

The needless commute would have numerous negative effects on the student including: less sleep from an earlier wake-up time; loss of health benefits of walking to school; lost time for afterschool homework and/or extra curricular activities; diminished connection between her immediate neighborhood community and school community; decreased safety for outdoor play resulting from increased traffic directly around our home which is a quarter mile from Hamm.

The proposed boundary changes reflect poor planning and even worse problem-solving by APS. If approved, the changes would punish a large number of students for errors made by the district.

Keep our kids in their neighborhood. Keep Hamm walkable!

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4726

My name is [redacted] go to Dorothy Hamm [redacted]. I am writing in regards to the current situation with the relocation of students from Dorothy Hamm to Williamsburg. I am completely against this. As it is right now Dorothy Hamm is about a 9 minute walk from my house. If my child went to Williamsburg they would be a bus rider which would put a greater burden and financial impact on the county. With the shortage of bus drivers, I can't imagine how this plan would be implemented properly. Please reconsider this as a large majority of Dorothy Hamm consists of walkers. In a county where environmental issues are important taking walkers and putting them as bus riders goes against that idea. I am hoping the school board does the right thing for the students and for the community by not relocating Hamm students to Williamsburg.

Thank you for your time

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4785

I'm the parent of [redacted] at Tuckahoe, from Planning Unit 16140. I understand that the Pre-CIP Report recommends switching our unit from Swanson MS to Williamsburg MS.

I just wanted to say that I (and every other parent I've spoken with on the block) think this is a great idea, and strongly support it. Although being walking distance to Swanson is nice, we've never liked the idea of our kids being split from their elementary school friends right as they switch schools. Also, we understand the enrollment projections and the need to better utilize the Williamsburg space.

So, we strongly support the move of our planning unit to Williamsburg, and hope that it ends up in the final recommendations.

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4730

One of the great thing about communities that back up to the Bluemont Trail is that the students from these planning units may walk to/from Kenmore and get much needed and a good amount of exercise. This proposed change would take away that opportunity! Please dont move ahead with this plan.

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4731

Good afternoon,

Please reconsider your proposal for the middle school boundaries. We live in the neighborhood and under this proposal my children will be bussed to Williamsburg rather than walk to Hamm.

In other parts of this proposal under the elementary section, you mention the need for walkable schools. This is in direct conflict with this redistricting. Why wouldn't walkable kids remain at their school? Why bus two sets of kids — the current Hamm kids to Williamsburg and the new Hamm kids from different locations? We currently have 20 unstaffed bussing positions. Why create an even greater demand on an already inadequate resource and also lose our community schools? I don't understand why you won't just relocate the Spanish Immersion program to Williamsburg since that school is under enrolled. That would only involve bussing one set of students. The listed prioritization for this redistricting is either untrue or non-sensical. It does not make any sense to move so many walkers and bus more children.

This is logically inconsistent with our experience with APS over th years, the values of APS, and the goals Arlingotn and APS have as a community. Please do not go forward with this redistricting.

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4733

Please reconsider 15060 - should stay assigned to Swanson given children moving in/out of the neighborhood. That data is likely not yet reflected in the numbers used in the analysis.

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4735

I do not believe that the data includes The Grove at Dominion Hills, which is adding 42 houses to Planning Unit 14030.

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4736

Dear planning unit,

I'm not sure if this is the best way to engage in the boundary setting process, but I strongly feel that Lorcom Lane is the wrong place to draw the line for Dorothy Hamm middle school, due to the huge number of kids that can walk just blocks to this school on the other side of Lorcom. It would be such a shame to change that sense of freedom and community for these kids, when the school is not even having capacity issues. I hope you will reconsider that proposal. It just doesn't seem to make sense to switch a seven minute walker to a 15-20 minute busser.

Thank you for taking these concerns into consideration.

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4737

In reviewing the plans for Dorothy Hamm, I remember our entire argument to request that building and move HB Woodlawn was to save on the costly \$95000 buses; the majority of the community were walkers and bikers. By moving those walker/bikers back to Williamsburg, you are once again breaking up the Taylor Community and requiring more costly buses.

The sense of freedom and community in walking and biking to school when my kids moved from Williamsburg to Dorothy Hamm was one of the biggest savings and blessings to my boys [redacted]. It freed them so very much and added so much social connection.

On a purely budgetary argument, I think it is ridiculous to go back to bussing these walkers. From a social aspect, I sure hope you do not. It changed my kids' lives.

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4739

Ridiculous concept. Does not represent or take into account tax payers preferences or allocation. Proposition not performed by enquiring from neighborhood or parents and this represents a misrepresentation and over reach by the school board. In no way will Donaldson Run accept this and County Board will not only be voted out yet will face legal challenges. Disgraceful proposal.

Thank you to the APS staff for listening to the concerns of the Ashlawn community regarding the isolation of the small number of Ashlawn students who remain at Kenmore under the pre-CIP plan. It felt like the staff understood the problems with isolating a handful of Ashlawn students from their peers, and I greatly appreciate that. It felt like our concerns were heard.

I realize that there is a limited amount of time before staff develops its revised plan. I wanted to reiterate our suggestion that the best solution to this is to send all Ashlawn students to Swanson, and make the Barrett split closer to 50/50 between Kenmore and Swanson (rather than the lopsided split in the pre-CIP plan). This substantially reduces isolation for students at both schools and reduces transportation costs overall. Below I am re-transmitting the justification for this proposal that I had sent in an earlier email that focused on the student headcount numbers in our planning units.

Under the pre-CIP plan, four Barrett planning units (12030, 12031, 12050, and 12070) would move from Kenmore to Swanson, leaving only two Barrett planning units (12010 and 12020) at Kenmore. Because I have not done a similar neighborhood headcount for Barrett, I don't know precisely how many Barrett students live in those two remaining Kenmore planning units. But even if we were to go by the larger number in the spreadsheet, those Barrett students would be extremely isolated at Kenmore. For instance, those two remaining planning units have only six rising fourth-graders, the first class to be impacted by this boundary change. Under the pre-CIP proposal, those six students (or even fewer) would be the only Barrett students in their grade of more than 300 at Kenmore.

The least disruptive solution to reduce isolation for both Ashlawn and Barrett students is to place all Ashlawn planning units at Swanson, and have something closer to a 50/50 split between Swanson and Kenmore for Barrett, rather than the lopsided distribution in the pre-CIP proposal. Because I don't have the exact numbers about your enrollment targets for both Kenmore and Swanson, I can suggest two possible solutions. First, you could simply maintain the status quo for Barrett students and keep 12030, 12031, 12050, and 12070 at Kenmore, along with 12010 and 12020. This would result in six Barrett planning units at Kenmore and seven at Swanson, with a roughly even split and minimizing isolation for Barrett students. Alternatively, if you need more Barrett students at Swanson than at Kenmore, you could keep at Kenmore only the two Barrett units closest to Kenmore (12030 and 12031), which would result in four Barrett planning units at Kenmore and nine at Swanson. In either scenario, the Barrett students who remain at Kenmore would know more of their classmates than under the pre-CIP plan.

Moreover, our proposal prevents the prospect of double-isolation for students in planning units 13050 and 13062, a prospect that few other APS students would face. Under the pre-CIP plan, these students would be isolated from their peers twice - first when they enter middle school, and again when they enter high school, as some go to Yorktown and others go to Washington-Liberty. Sending only a handful of them to Kenmore means that once they reach high school, they would lose most of the friends they made in middle school, as most of those friends would likely attend Wakefield. Keeping these Ashlawn students with their elementary classmates at middle school reduces the number of times they are isolated from their peers.

Of course, the other main consideration is transportation, and maximizing the number of students who can walk to school. Our proposal would be a **net benefit to APS from a transportation perspective**. The four Barrett planning units would take the bus to either Kenmore or Swanson, but they are much closer to Kenmore, so that would at least result in a shorter bus route for them. The two Ashlawn planning units that would move to Swanson are in the walk zones for both Kenmore and Swanson, so they would not increase the number of bus riders.

The transportation needs weigh in favor of solving the isolation problem by maintaining a 50/50 split of Barrett students at Kenmore and sending all Ashlawn students to Swanson, rather than vice versa. That is because Barrett planning units 12010 and 12020 are in the Kenmore walking zone. Moving them to Swanson would result in a shift of those planning units from walking to buses. In contrast, moving the two remaining Ashlawn planning units to Swanson would not result in additional bus riders, as those Ashlawn planning units are in the Swanson walk zone.

In short, our proposal would benefit not only Ashlawn students, but all students at Barrett, Kenmore, and Swanson, by increasing the likelihood that all students will know their classmates in middle school, and reducing the burden on the school district's transportation system. I hope this is helpful, and I'm happy to address any questions or concerns that you have.

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4768

Current resident [redacted] with an impacted student [redacted] at Ashlawn) to share our support of the proposed middle school boundary change for PL 13031. Our son would be in the first class to shift from Kenmore to Swanson.

We have some experience with the adjustment to boundary changes, our daughter was the first class from our PL to go from Ashlawn to Kenmore to Yorktown after the high school redistricting from W&L. While she had a really great experience at Yorktown, the only friends she knew Freshman year were mostly some Ashlawn friends she was reunited with who had gone to Swanson, and those that were in our planning unit and didn't go to W&L (for IB or because they grandfathered into W&L). Long story short, it wasn't a big group. She's particularly adaptable, but that transition would be difficult for others.

We think the proposed change makes a lot of sense for our unit. It would ensure that those in 13031 are able to make the transition from middle school to high school with a much larger group. I think ensuring that each middle school has multiple planning units tracking to a high school is a very important consideration. And with feedback from her experience, ensuring students have a solid and diverse group of friends going into high school is very important as students at that age have more independence and pressure from their peers.

At the end of the day, all of the schools in Arlington are great, but I think streamlining those transition periods for our kids, maximizing their connection to an established community is important to prioritize. We're supportive of this change and feel it would not only be best for our son, but others in our PL.

4750

I am a parent of [redacted] Hamm students; [redacted] former. My former student currently rides a school bus to high school. Due to the shortage of bus drivers, his route is often changed, routes are temporarily merged, bus drivers are switched around, causing drivers unfamiliar with the route to arrive late, making students late for school. Therefore, I cannot understand why APS could consider shifting kids who currently walk to Hamm onto a school bus.

We do not have enough bus drivers to adequately cover the current routes. Arlington promotes a car-free lifestyle. We know that kids spend too little time outdoors and not enough time moving their bodies. So, as I would say to my children, "help me understand why this proposal (to move kids within walking distance of Hamm to Willisamsburg) seems like a good idea". It doesn't.

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4765 and 4766

I am writing to express my deep concern and strong opposition to the proposed re-zoning of the Dorothy Hamm middle school boundary lines. As a parent of a child who will be directly affected by this change, I feel compelled to voice my dissatisfaction with a proposal that will have far-reaching consequences for our children and our neighborhood.

The current proposal would force children from our community to take a long and unnecessary bus ride to a distant school, rather than walk a short distance to the middle school that our neighborhood has been a part of for decades. This change not only disrupts the daily routines of families but also undermines the sense of community that has been fostered through generations (72 years) of neighborhood children attending Dorothy Hamm (previously Stratford Junior High School and H-B Woodlawn).

The following are some of the key concerns that I wish to highlight:

- 1. Loss of Community Connection:** Since 1951 Dorothy Hamm has been our local school and a vital part of our community, fostering relationships among neighbors and providing a sense of belonging. The proposed change threatens to sever these connections and disrupt the fabric of our community.
- 2. Decreased Family Security:** The Washington, DC metropolitan area has been the site of major terrorist attacks, riots, and severe weather events. The possibility of another major disruptive event occurring is real and could necessitate parents dropping everything to ensure the safety of their children. Reports indicate that the proposed changes would re-zone a significant number of students, approximately two-thirds of the Hamm student population, to a school many miles away from their homes. Should another disaster strike the DC metro area, forcing a substantial number of parents to drive frantically, along with other distressed drivers, to a distant location, will create a chaotic and agonizing situation. This scenario is foreseeable and avoidable. By refraining from re-zoning, families would be able to reunite quickly, simply by walking to the school down the street. Living in an area that is susceptible to both natural and man-made disasters, the Arlington County School Board should be aiding families in their disaster preparedness plans, rather than creating avoidable complications during times of considerable stress.
- 3. Health Consequences of Discouraging Walking or Biking to School:** Encouraging children to walk or bike to school is more than just a convenient mode of transportation; it's an investment in their overall

well-being. In an age where sedentary lifestyles are prevalent, encouraging children to walk or bike to school is a simple yet effective way to instill healthy habits and maintain a healthy weight. Walking or biking to school encourages independence, responsibility, and awareness of their surroundings, fostering personal growth and development. Re-zoning will force re-zoned students to rely on buses and cars for transportation, further facilitating sedentary lifestyles.

**4. Increased Transportation Time:** The long bus ride to the new school will add unnecessary stress to our children's daily lives. This additional travel time takes away from valuable family time, extracurricular activities and rest.

**5. Environmental & Safety Impact:** The increased use of buses and cars will contribute to more traffic and pollution in our area. This is contrary to the growing emphasis on sustainability and environmental responsibility. More heavy, industrialized buses using carbon based fossil fuels to manufacturing them and for gas and tires is not the way to go for a carbon-free or neutral environment.

The National Safety Council reports in 2021 (during the COVID lockdown) there were 108 fatalities deaths in school bus related accidents and 9,700 injuries in school bus related accidents. The current Hamm walkers have sidewalks and paths that have been proven safe from decades of use. The safety of our children should be the priority in any decision. In this case, safe choice is not re-zone and allow 2/3rds of our community's children to continue to walk to Hamm.

I kindly urge you to reconsider the proposed re-zoning of the middle school boundary lines. I believe that our children's education and well-being should be at the forefront of any decision-making process. I request that you engage with the community, listen to our concerns, and find a solution that preserves the integrity of our neighborhood and the quality of our children's education.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

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4738

My [redacted] attends Kenmore Middle School and most of her friends fall within the Washington - Liberty boundary and only a very small section, including us, are assigned to Wakefield. Will the boundaries for High Schools be readjusted or is there a process for requesting an exception for my daughter to attend Washington- Liberty [redacted]?

Our address is [redacted] and I do not think it is fair to have Kenmore students posit between two High Schools.

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4815

I am writing in reference to the revisions of the middle school boundary revisions.

**Please consider sending all Glebe Elementary School planning units to Hamm Middle School.**

- My [redacted] in Planning Unit 15061. Our block on [redacted] is cut off from the rest of our adjacent neighbors for high school because of our different planning units. Our family would go

to Yorktown while the neighbors across the street go to W&L. By moving Planning Unit 15061 to Hamm from Swanson, we will also be cut off from our neighbors.

- Glebe Elementary School is divided among Hamm and Swanson Middle Schools. By moving planning units 15061 and 15060 to Hamm, there will be less Glebe Elementary students going to Swanson. My son is experiencing having few friends from Glebe at Swanson now.
- Walk zones are not that walkable to Swanson from 15120, 15121, 15030, 15040, 15041, 15050, 15060 and 15061 planning units. Our children have to cross George Mason and go by the busy newly expanded hospital. There are a lot more visitor cars and street parking that our kids have to navigate to cross George Mason than they would on Glebe Road and Langston Blvd. There are limited bike lanes for our students especially around the hospital. The walk zones should not be the reason to further separate Glebe students.
- Move Planning Unit 16090 from Glebe to Cardinal. Most if not all families we know have transferred already. That Planning Unit should just go to Cardinal and Swanson.
- Please considering keeping more elementary students together for middle school. We have friends who went to Nottingham and had only 8 classmates go to Swanson. The transition is hard enough to middle school.
- By moving all of Glebe to Hamm, then planning units for all of Ashlawn and Barrett Elementary Schools could stay together and possibly all to go to Swanson. This would free up room for Kenmore Middle School.

Thank you.

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4823

I have a few questions related to the Pre-CIP Report, please.

- Will the CIP Report be updated before the recommendations are released in October? I see a date of Sept 15 where it states "release of boundary proposal incorporating input from community".
- Will the SB Work Session on Boundaries be open to the public? What can we expect from that session, if so?
- The timeline shows that on October 26 that: "The School Board Votes on the FY 2025-34 CIP Direction". What does it mean for the School Board to vote on the direction?

Thank you!

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4828

Unless the high school Spanish program moves to Washington Liberty, it doesn't make sense to move it from gunston. Kids will make friends at Kenmore not in the Spanish immersion program and then they



won't be in high school with those friends. Prefer to have kids stay with the friends they make in middle school (GMS) for high school (WHS)

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4830

**The proposed middle school boundary changes have a major impact on the Barrett and Kenmore school communities and Arlington Forest neighborhood.**

- Currently all of Arlington Forest is within the Kenmore boundary (PU 12010, 12020, 12030, 12031, 37010). APS' proposal moves PU 12030 and 12031 to Swanson. Your proposal divides the neighborhood!
- APS info states it would not allow current students to stay at Kenmore when their boundary changes. So current 6th graders would have to go to Swanson for 8th grade. This means students in Kenmore's unique arts and STEAM programs would not be able to continue in these. Kenmore has a STEAM Certificate that students obtain at the end of 8th grade. What is your plan for allowing these students to achieve this Certificate?
- Currently Barrett students divide into Kenmore and Swanson for middle school. This is difficult for children already at this age. Now it appears that all Barrett students would be within the Swanson boundary, except for Arlington Forest PU 12010 and 12020. Therefore Greenbrier children may only know a few kids when they go to middle school. The middle school years are difficult enough and now these few kids will not have any Barrett friends with them when they transition to middle school. Have you considered this?
- Does APS consider social and emotional health when it makes these decisions?
- APS continues to shift boundaries for elementary, middle, and high schools. It is very unsettling for children to not know where they will go to school and whether they will know others at that school. Please take a moment to consider the impact on people's lives and not only taxpayer money.

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4831

My name is [redacted], and I am the parent of a Kenmore Middle School and Barrett Elementary School student.

I am concerned about the proposal to move some Arlington Forest kids to Swanson and others to Kenmore. Kenmore is a diverse school, and moving Arlington Forest students to Swanson will only lead to more inequities.

The proposal would also leave a few students at Kenmore, further isolating this number from their Barrett Classmates.

I ask that the School Board leave the Arlington Forest boundaries as is - with the kids north of George Mason attending Kenmore.

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4832

As a parent [redacted] on the Greenbriar side of Arlington Forest, and a professional school counselor. I STRONGLY oppose changing the majority of KW Barrett students to Swanson Middle School except Greenbriar side students.

I experienced my elementary school class being split to attend different middle schools. This made my transition to middle school extra difficult as I had very few familiar faces in my classes while other students had many friends and familiar faces in their classes.

The transition to middle school is already a very difficult and awkward time for kids, not just with school but developmentally as well. Taking away a majority of their friends they have attended school with will cause unnecessary stress and anxiety. Something I think you know this generation is already struggling enough with. If you're going to move some of KW Barrett, please move all of the students or keep them all at Kenmore.

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4883

My [redacted] at Barrett Elementary. We live in the Arlington Forest Greenbrier neighborhood ([redacted]), and are currently zoned for Kenmore. I understand that the new proposal for middle school boundaries would move all Barrett students except for our slice of Arlington Forest to Swanson. I am writing to urge you to reconsider this. It would be significantly detrimental to separate our daughter from all of her elementary school friends, as we move into the critical middle school years.

I urge you to please either (1) move all Barrett kids to Kenmore (preferred); or (2) move all Barrett kids to Swanson. Alternatively, you could leave the boundaries as is, with all Arlington Forest kids north of Route 50 going together to Kenmore.

Please don't isolate our kids from their friends.

Your prompt response would be appreciated.

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4834

Hello APS policy-makers, engagement supporters, and school board,

I am the proud parent of a KW Barrett elementary [redacted], writing about the proposed middle school boundary changes, particularly to Kenmore.

I find the proposal concerning for several reasons:

1) **I do not see what problem it will solve.** Per your own data and report, ***this will not improve capacity issues or transportation issues.*** It best it delays an overcapacity issue for a year, all while creating significant disruption and harm to several school communities to readjust boundaries.

2) **It will create additional harm, further separating elementary students from their elementary school peers at a delicate and important time in their academic, and more importantly, personal development.** For several school clusters, this will mean one or two planning units will be separated from their peers, perhaps during their middle school years, a particularly tough time for that change. My daughter at Barrett would be one of only two planning units to stay at Kenmore from Barrett; all of her friends would transfer to Swanson through this proposal. Similar patterns exist at Ashlawn and other schools. This would be exacerbated if this move is made mid-middle school years, such that all the friends made, work at orientation established in her 6th grade year would be broken apart for years 7 and 8. **\*\*\*At a minimum, I urge you to keep those who entered school previously at their same schools until middle school graduation. 7th and 8th graders should remain at the school they started at.\*\*\***

3) **It will create additional crowding and transportation issues, safety risks.** I live on [redacted]. There have been numerous accidents, both minor and major with severe injuries, including to pedestrians. I hear that Kenmore is quite crowded at drop off / pick up. That would be exacerbated with this move.

4) **It will threaten some of your strongest, sought after programs in our fine public schools.** We are excited to participate in theater, dance, etc. at Kenmore. We've heard wonderful things about the principal. I can't imagine this can stay in tact without harmful impacts should this proposal go through to staff, programs, all the things that make our strong neighborhood schools great.

5) **It will increase applications to option schools, increasing crowding in turn and frustration for those not accepted.** As the program moves further north, more families will apply for immersion. If Kenmore becomes overcrowded and loses its excellent programming and staff and leadership, more families like mine will look at option schools or have to move away from the district in frustration.

**I am urging you to prioritize neighborhood community-building schools, to prioritize kids' mental health** over being 3% over capacity rather than 4%. **Please prioritize continuity for our kids-** the kids who will be in your middle schools in 2025-2026 are those who were in K, 1, 2 during the pandemic. They are resilient, yes; they are strong and will persevere. They shouldn't have to again

Those who have opted for option schools have made a choice to move out of their neighborhoods and communities; some in my neighborhood have been quite explicit that they are moving explicitly TO "get away from" their neighborhood school. They are willing to travel for those choices and should be the ones to do so. If the program is over capacity, perhaps more schools need to be built (rather than 4 elementary schools within a mile in north arlington). There is much more to say and I am happy to do so and plan to at future board meetings. Meanwhile please reconsider more disruption to our students lives' and spirits, particular when the benefit is completely unclear to we families who opt to live, work, and attend school in our beloved neighborhoods. I can't understand why you'd make this choice. Who does it benefit? Who does it cost?

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4850

Thank you for your response to my email in July (below in the thread).

The transportation analysis in Appendix I to the Pre-CIP report assumed that ALL immersion students not in the walk zone for a given middle school would get an immersion bus if the immersion program were at

that middle school. That is incorrect - the immersion students that are normally assigned to a middle school and are not in the walk zone for that middle school would be on the neighborhood buses for that middle school. For example, immersion students who live in the Gunston attendance zone (but not in the Gunston walk zone) do not get assigned hub stops, but instead are included on the regular neighborhood stops. Accounting for this error, I estimate that the number of "immersion buses" that would be needed if immersion were situation at each middle school would be:

Assigned School	Immersion Buses Needed	
	Estimated Enrollment from Transfer Report	Number in Pre-CIP Report
Hamm	8	9
Jefferson	7	9
Kenmore	7	8
Swanson	8	9
Williamsburg	9	9
Gunston	7	9

This estimate is based on past enrollment in the MS immersion program, based on the transfer reports for the past 4 years (since Hamm opened). You can see my analysis here: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1SzHzhve6Wc3JMTi\\_IYURoUhMzopRYP7I7trc3DcazQw/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1SzHzhve6Wc3JMTi_IYURoUhMzopRYP7I7trc3DcazQw/edit?usp=sharing)

I'd be happy to discuss this analysis with you.

4862

The timeline for the engage page on MS Boundaries says under Fall 2025 that August 2024 is when the new boundaries begin. I believe that is supposed to be August 2025.

**Fall 2025**

- August 2024: School Begins with the New Middle School Boundaries and Program Moves

<https://www.apsva.us/engage/2023-ms-boundaries/>

4885

I am writing to express my disapproval of the recommendations proposed in the Pre-CIP report. More specifically, I disapprove of the proposed middle school boundary adjustments that would force local children, including one of my children who can walk to Dorothy Hamm Middle School, to take buses all the way to Williamsburg Middle School.

I have [redacted] children in Arlington Public Schools. My oldest currently attends Dorothy Hamm Middle School and we have been happy with her middle school experience. We live well within walking distance, about half of a mile from Dorothy Hamm, and she walks to and from school everyday. [redacted] is at Taylor Elementary School and would attend Williamsburg Middle School under the proposed boundary changes. Having experienced sending a child to Dorothy Hamm and seeing firsthand the benefits of entering school with her former Taylor classmates and walking to school, I am very concerned that the quality of my younger child's middle school experience is being sacrificed to arbitrarily add a number to Williamsburg's population.

I listened to a community roundtable session on the middle school boundaries and Spanish immersion program move. During the roundtable discussion, it was explained that the only way to address the underutilization of Williamsburg was to expand its boundaries into the walk zones of Swanson and Dorothy Hamm. I do not understand why expanding Williamsburg's boundaries into the walk zones of Swanson and Dorothy Hamm was the only option. I'm concerned that obtaining "parity" is only in regard to the number of students enrolled and not to their experiences. It was mentioned that a smaller school could provide fewer opportunities to its students, but it was not clear what harm Williamsburg students are facing. It does not appear that Swanson or Dorothy Hamm are overcapacity and need to lose households. Are there any other alternatives for Williamsburg that were studied?

There seem to be a lot of unanswered questions that are making this process feel rushed. For instance, part of the rationale given for adjusting middle school boundaries was good stewardship of taxpayer funds. I've heard mention of more buses and bus drivers being needed but have not seen a dollar figure assigned to that need. What is the projected cost of busing former walkers from the planning units that are being reassigned? What cost for underutilization of Williamsburg is that compared against?

Also, it was acknowledged that proposed boundary changes will increase congestion from buses, to include from the need to stack and stage buses. As a parent who has walked to Dorothy Hamm to meet teachers and attend school events, I see myself having to drive a lot more if my younger child attends Williamsburg. As a one-car household, I see myself potentially needing to get a second car. I am concerned that there will be many second and third-order effects on traffic and the environment stemming from this change that aren't being considered. Has APS considered and analyzed the environmental impacts from increased congestion and traffic?

While I understand the goals of relocating the immersion program to a more central location and achieving parity between the middle schools in the county, it does not appear you considered the feasibility in having two smaller immersion programs, which would also achieve your goals. Many parents in the community have expressed interest in having two smaller immersion programs. Is that something that APS may analyze and consider?

There was mention of six policy factors considered during the process of proposing boundary changes. The presenters mentioned several times that trade-offs had to be made between the factors. Is there any explanation for how trade-offs between the policy considerations were decided? All I have heard so far have been conclusory statements that lack factual support. I've tried to make sense of these proposals, but I can't understand who asked for this and what parents actually want these changes. It is very hard to trust this process.

Please do not go forward with the recommendations proposed in the Pre-CIP report. It lacks thoughtful analysis. I think you should return to the drawing board and reconsider these proposals.

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4933

Dear Dr. Durán,

I am writing as a mom to [redacted] at Escuela Key, who is confused about the sudden cancellation of the community table focusing on the proposal to move the MS immersion program from Gunston to Kenmore.

I don't have any idea what are the recent developments in the 2023 Middle School Boundary Process and Relocation of the Spanish Immersion program, but I hope that a proposal about moving the program will still be on the table.

The current location of the MS immersion program is very challenging to many families including ours not only because of the distance but also because of the overcrowding issues at Gunston. That's why we have been very excited about the proposal to move the program to Kenmore. Today we felt very disappointed when the community table focusing on this proposal was suddenly cancelled without further explanation than just "recent developments".

We hope this is just the need of more time to make further analysis but that the proposal to move the program still exists. It is time that we all have a better access to the program in terms of a more central campus.

I appreciate yours and your staff work.

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4889

Dear APS staff,

We and our neighbors have serious concerns about the current proposals to move students who can walk to Hamm Middle School and shift them to Williamsburg Middle School. We spell out these concerns below. Nobody we've talked to thinks this is a good idea and we encourage APS to continue to modify its proposals with input from the community. This effort isn't just about getting the right number of projected students at the schools. It also impacts Arlingtonians and their lives, so taking those intangibles into account is critical.

First, regarding middle school boundaries: taking students who can walk to Hamm and busing them to Williamsburg makes no sense from an economic, social, or physical perspective.

- Keeping students at schools in their neighborhoods within walking distance is a key criteria APS relies on when making its decisions. APS used this criteria in 2014 when it determined we needed a new middle school where Hamm is now located. Additionally, one of the key objectives of that 2014 decision was to keep cohorts together as they move through the APS system. Shifting a significant portion of students to Williamsburg would violate these planning guidelines.

- Keeping groups of kids together is best for the students and the community. We can only imagine the absolute fear our child will experience if he is forced to go to another school with only a handful of kids from his elementary school. We've heard the same from a parent who's child would be split from friends moved to Williamsburg while he stays at Hamm.

- Arlington can't find or afford enough bus drivers, and we should not contribute to that challenge. Bussing additional students would also mean more buses on narrow, winding streets, as well as unnecessary pollution.

- Families want their kids to walk or want to walk with them to Hamm. Attending a school in the neighborhood is a desirable aspect of living here; this is something that can't be measured or captured on a powerpoint slide. Giving middle school kids the opportunity to walk to school is healthier for them, builds healthy habits for the students, and gives them a sense of independence during important formative years.

- Forcing students to bus to school unnecessarily cuts into sleep and family time, two precious things that, as parents, we wish our kids had more of. Walking to school is a memory my kids will remember for their entire lives because they got to spend more time with a parent and when older, walking through the neighborhood themselves.

- Hamm is not projected to be at capacity, so let's keep in mind we have flexibility in making decisions that affect people's lives and families.

As we note above, there are intangible aspects of these decisions that impact the community in many ways. We urge APS to refine it's plan to keep walkers at Hamm and recognize the very negative impacts moving kids from Hamm to Williamsburg will have on the students and community.

Second, as parents of a child who attended Kenmore MS's STEAM program, we fear the program will be severely limited or eliminated as an option for students if the Spanish Immersion program is moved to Kenmore without taking the STEAM program into account. Without the ability to transfer, talented students will miss out on STEAM program offerings.. We are confused as to why APS is only looking at Kenmore as the option for Spanish Immersion. Being an option program, the Spanish Immersion Program can be located anywhere, including at Williamsburg MS, which is projected to be around 65 percent capacity. We and others do not understand why APS will not entertain any other schools for the Spanish immersion program. We've also heard from parents of students who have children in the Spanish Immersion who are adamant about not moving the program from Gunston. We would like to see more opinions taken into account as the process moves forward.

Thank you very much for your attention to these complex challenges, Sticking with the criteria outlined in APS planning guidance, we can develop more viable options that are less disruptive to the neighborhoods and students.

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4907

We are writing as Arlington County residents to express our concerns with the proposed boundary changes for Dorothy Hamm Middle School. Our children currently attend Taylor Elementary. Under the proposed boundary changes, we would remain in boundary to attend Dorothy Hamm Middle School. However, the proposed changes would send most of our children's Taylor classmates, many of whom actually live much closer to Dorothy Hamm than us, to Williamsburg Middle School.

As you are well aware, the pandemic and resulting school closures were extremely challenging for many families, including ours. Our experience when the schools reopened in the fall of 2021 was transformative. Our children have thrived at Taylor and have loved becoming part of the vibrant community. The proposal to now change the middle school boundaries will remove the strong community foundation that we have been able to develop at Taylor over the past two years. We are still recovering from the learning and emotional disruptions of the pandemic and we are concerned about the profound impact of this social disruption upon entry into middle school, an already vulnerable time in a child's life.

We wanted to submit this comment to explain why the proposed boundary change will also have a negative impact on families who will remain within the boundary lines for Dorothy Hamm. Thank you for your consideration.

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4908

My name is [redacted] and I am excited to tell you that my child is [redacted] at Escuela Key. My child is thriving with her Spanish language ability and I am doing all that I can to support her language acquisition. The current location of the immersion middle school (Gunston - 2700 S Lang St, Arlington, VA 22206) is 17 minutes away from our home. The proposed location for the immersion middle school is (Kenmore- 200 S Carlin Springs Rd, Arlington, VA 22204) 9 minutes away from our home. When considering at the end of fifth grade whether to continue the Spanish language immersion program, the commute will play a large factor in the decisionmaking process. A 9-minute commute is much more reasonable than a 17-minute commute to school, especially when compared to our home middle school (Swanson - 5800 N Washington Blvd, Arlington, VA 22205) - only 5 minutes away.

As a life-long language learner myself, I understand the importance of an environment conducive to maintaining and growing a second and even a third language. As a parent, it doesn't make sense to travel to the other side of the county on a regular basis when there are centrally located middle schools that could easily support the continuation of the Spanish language immersion program.

I very much want my child to continue with Spanish beyond fifth grade. The gift of a second language is intangible and once given can never be taken away. I believe we (as parents and administrators) can help strengthen the Spanish immersion program with the move of the middle school from Gunston



Middle School (2700 S Lang St, Arlington, VA 22206) to the more centrally located Kenmore Middle School (200 S Carlin Springs Rd, Arlington, VA 22204).

Thank you very much for your time and your help as you consider the proposal to move the Spanish language immersion program to Kenmore Middle School.

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4927

I am a parent of a [redacted] Claremont kid and [redacted] Gunston kid, both in the immersion program. I am writing to encourage you to please move the immersion program to Kenmore! I know there are several people who are complaining very loudly about moving the immersion program, but there are a lot of us who are fine or would embrace the program moving to Kenmore.

First, we are in the TJ Middle school district, so you will be busing my kid to a middle school somewhere. It makes no difference to me if you bus them to Gunston or Kenmore (or TJ). Gunston is insanely overcrowded and will continue to be overcrowded, plus only getting worse, due to natural population growth in the South and in the immersion program. Moving immersion allows for Gunston to better support growth, and for better growth in immersion. There are more ELLs at Kenmore, which would provide more opportunities to have ELL students in spanish immersion classes, helping them learn english and keep their spanish skills.

Kenmore is easier to get to from a driving perspective and more centrally located, making it a much better fit for immersion.

Please move the Immersion program to Kenmore!

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4928

Good afternoon

Apparently some parents received a message on Parent Square that tonight's meeting on the potential MS immersion move has been postponed. However, the meeting is still listed on the APS Website.

What's going on?

<https://www.apsva.us/event/community-table-session-on-relocating-the-spanish-immersion-program/>

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5048

Hi, we live 0.3 mile from Dorothy Hamm MS right on the intersection of [redacted]. One can not live closer than that to a school. The new proposal assigns us to Williamsburg MS. I think it makes total sense to revisit the proposed boundary so it is not excluding someone like me who lives almost on the school's campus. Whom in APS can we talk to about this? Please let me know. Thank you.

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5045

I am VERY happy that all the planning units of Tuckahoe Elementary School will be kept together in middle school. Splitting up an elementary school has never made sense to me so I'm thrilled with this change.

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5036

I am the mother of a current gunston [redacted] student and I have a child at claremont. I support the proposed plan to move middle school immersion from gunston to Kenmore.

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5034

Dear Dr. Duran and Members of the School Board,

I am writing today to express my support for the proposed Spanish Immersion Middle School move to Kenmore. The Office of Planning and Evaluation provided a plethora of answers to a round of questions from the Immersion community and one piece of data that I found extremely compelling was the number of Spanish speakers at Kenmore. The percentage of native Spanish speakers was higher than Gunston and I think that housing the immersion program at a location where there is already a large Spanish-speaking population makes a lot of sense. It allows APS to leverage its resources, especially the human resources that already support ELL students. In addition, it could allow for newcomers to take classes in Spanish so they would still be accessing grade-level content while acquiring the English language skills in their other classes. It is critical that ELL students be able to access grade-level content; however, that can be extremely difficult to achieve especially for students who are just beginning to acquire English at the middle school level. Thinking out of the box on how to best serve these students is absolutely necessary and immersion could be a resource to help provide an equitable education to this population of students.

APS needs to be strategic in its thinking about how the system will support our English Language learners. Looking at the demographic data on the dashboard, over 65% of ELL students are hispanic. In addition, the data shows that the hispanic population makes up about 30% of the total student population in APS. Focusing on this demographic using high quality, research-based educational models will be essential for helping APS close the achievement gap for this population of students. Immersion models are research-based and notably one of the best models for ELL instruction.

In addition to the benefit an immersion model provides to ELL, I also want to address comments I have heard during this process, I have seen through various parent groups that there is a desire for the immersion program to move to Williamsburg. This is an incredible equity issue should APS go in this direction. First, it will likely lead to a decent amount of attrition due to the non-central location. Currently, your immersion program consists of more Claremont students than Key students. And while it might lead to an increase in the Key population, it will likely lead to a decrease in Claremont program continuation. With the current immersion location of Gunston, I know students who are on the bus for over an hour each day, each way. It's those students who live near Yorktown/Williamsburg. I would

happily give up my child's 10 minute commute for a longer commute to a more central location like Kenmore so that her peers did not have to be on the bus for an hour.

In my opinion, option programs should be in the middle of the county. It provides more equitable access for ALL students. In addition, the location of Kenmore puts the least strain on our Hispanic population as a large portion of that population is located near or closer to that location than Williamsburg.

I appreciate and understand the magnificent scope of this analysis and decision-making process. I hope that APS puts our ELL students first in thinking about this decision and considers this decision with an equity lens. It is unconscionable to consider a move that would displace the population that would most benefit from the immersion model.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

(current Claremont and Gunston parent)

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4912

We are residents of planning unit 16130, and we currently have [redacted] at Tuckahoe elementary. We are strongly opposed to the proposed change of our planning unit from Swanson to Williamsburg. We are a 15-minute walk and a 5-minute bike ride from Swanson. If we're moved to Williamsburg, we will have to ride a bus instead. It makes no sense to move kids from a walkable school to one that requires a bus.

I see from the planning documents that the rationale is that our children will move with their cohort from Tuckahoe. That reflects poor past decisionmaking about where our planning unit attends elementary school and should not form the basis of a decision about where they attend middle school. We live four blocks from Cardinal but my children are sitting 3 or 4 to a seat on an overcrowded bus to ride to Tuckahoe every day when we could be walking to Cardinal. If the reasoning behind the MS boundary move for us is to keep them with their cohort, you need to consider rezoning this planning unit for Cardinal instead.

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4919

I have [redacted] in the Spanish Immersion Program at APS. My oldest is at Gunston [redacted] and my youngest is [redacted] at Claremont. I am writing in support of the move to Kenmore, but with a question regarding planning for the move.

I believe the move to Kenmore could benefit the Immersion Program both due to a more central location and the higher number of EL students that are already in attendance at Kenmore.

My only concern regarding the move is about maintaining strong leadership of the Immersion program at the Middle School level. When we went through the most recent hiring of a principal at Gunston, ensuring the person who came in was a supporter of Immersion was a top interest for those of us in the

Immersion Program. I imagine when the program is moved to Kenmore, the current principal will stay in place. As such, my question for the planning process is how will you plan to make sure there are staff in leadership positions at Kenmore that are able to support the Immersion Program?

Thank you for your consideration.

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4931

I am very dismayed to see that APS has decided to postpone the community table session set to discuss the middle school boundaries and relocation of the Spanish Immersion program scheduled for tonight, 9/5. It is most upsetting that not only has the session been postponed with no future date posted, but that it was postponed minutes before it was scheduled to begin and no notification was sent to the community of the change. The only way I discovered it was postponed was because a friend happened to look under a different section on the Engage APS website than where I had been looking. The link for the virtual session is still active in the Timeline section of the website. It is already hard enough to have to "poke holes" in the data shown in order to refute the "pre-CIP", which collectively has taken hours of our parents' limited time and then plan to set time aside for an opportunity to present these findings; APS' lack of respect for all involved is so disheartening.

I look forward to the opportunity to present our community's findings, suggestions, recommendations, and ultimately demands.

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5049

I am [redacted], a parent with a child currently attending APS, and another set to join soon. As it stands, our current school assignment points to Dorothy Ham Middle School. However, it has come to our attention that APS is contemplating redrawing the school boundaries, potentially assigning us to Williamsburg Middle School.

Our home is just on the opposite side of Lorcom Lane, a mere 2-minute walk from the Dorothy Ham campus. The proposed reassignment, which groups everyone north of Lorcom Lane into Williamsburg Middle School, strikes us as a significant injustice to our children and lacks clear rationality. I, along with numerous parents residing in close proximity to Dorothy Ham, stand firmly against such a boundary adjustment.

I am eager to discuss this matter with the appropriate person at APS. Could you kindly direct me to the relevant contact? Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

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5003 and 5004

Hello, While it seems that the Spanish immersion program relocation to Kenmore seems to make sense, there is no sense in leaving two planning units behind when moving all other Ashlawn students to Swanson. As a result of such a rezoning, my [redacted] at Ashlawn would be separated from virtually all of our neighbors' children and all of their friends. Our home is located on [redacted]. Our neighbors

across the street, my daughters' friends from the bus stop, and her best friends will all be rezoned to Swanson under the current proposal, while my daughter and ONE of her friends would remain at Kenmore. For my kindergartner, the decision would be similarly devastating. As people who care about the school system and its students, I urge you to always keep children's mental health too of mind. That means keeping friends together whenever possible. I am a Social worker and understand the importance of community for children's well-being, and being in a neighborhood where all neighbors watch over all children. None of this would be possible with the current rezoning proposal, which years apart friends and neighbors living on opposite sides of the street. Please make sure of you rezone Ashlawn kids to Swanson that you move all Ashlawn kids and do not leave behind two small planning units, of which only about 6-10 students per grade would be separated from all of their friends and many neighborhood systems. I hope you will keep this in mind as you make important decisions like this. Thank you

While I understand that elementary school children in Arlington get sent to two middle schools, which means a separation of some friends, the proposed Ashlawn to middle school rezoning would leave only two small planning units of Ashlawn students at Kenmore while sending the vast majority—basically all Ashlawn students—to Swanson. This may satisfy your commitment to sending students from one elementary school to two middle schools, but does it really? Or does it show poor planning and will obviously cause parent and student upset unnecessarily? It seems the best options are either to move all to Swanson or to continue with the current plan of sending part of Ashlawn students to Swanson and a sizable group to Kenmore. It seems to not make sense to leave 6-10 students per grade from two planning units behind at Kenmore whole all their friends go to Swanson. This cannot be what you mean when you divide students among two middle schools.

Please think about this very carefully and make a decision in the best interest of all children.

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4995

I am a current DHMS parent and I urge APS not to change the boundaries for DHMS such that students who can walk to school now would have to take a bus to Williamsburg. APS has enough problems with bus service as it is and adding more does not make fiscal sense. Students who live close to DHMS should be walking to school, not riding a bus to a school several miles away.

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4944

I am a current Immersion parent. I am in support of the immersion middle school program relocating to Kenmore.

I think this move will bring balance in geographic location to families who feed into the immersion program from both North and South Arlington and will immediately provide relief to overcrowding at Gunston.

5050

Dear School Board Members,

We are writing today on behalf of current Dorothy Hamm-districted middle school age children (present and future) whom you propose redistricting to Williamsburg in 2 years. As school board members, you no doubt have experience as educators and parents and understand the crucial need for children to get adequate sleep. It is essential for their physical and emotional well-being and also their academic performance, which ultimately reflects on APS as a whole.

Similar to dozens of households in the current Hamm walk zone, we live a short walk (4 minutes) from the school's front door. Our son currently departs on foot at 7:30 and is early for school. Prior to Hamm's opening, the bus for Williamsburg stopped directly in front of our house. We would watch with our then toddler, out the window as sleepy middle schoolers walked in the near dark at 6:45am to catch the bus at 7am. In the dead of winter, it actually was dark. There are a number of roads in our neighborhood (including our own) that don't have sidewalks, and we recall being concerned for these kids' safety. About 40 minutes after the bus departed, the cars of neighbors started darting through our narrow streets. Those parents were allowing their children to sleep more and then racing to ensure their kids weren't late to school. This situation vanished when Hamm opened, and we and many of our neighbors were relieved knowing that our kids would sleep a bit more and walk at a more reasonable hour, not in the dark. Also, we have felt safer walking our dog in the early morning, as there are fewer cars racing around. We urge you not to re-introduce sleep reduction, walking in the dark and frantic parent driving that APS wisely eliminated here just a few years ago. Not to mention the buses.

Now, as parents of [redacted], we realize that many County sports' practices don't even end until after 9pm, which makes getting home and to bed at an early hour impossible. Court and field time is limited, and the younger kids practice earlier, so this is the reality we are faced with: cutting back on kids' activities, some of which are crucial for their physical and emotional health, so they can awaken earlier to catch a bus. In a post-covid era, we would expect the School Board to care about this sort of thing. There are many other activities for kids of this age that won't commence until their parents' working hours have concluded. That framework is not going to change. Certainly, there is a less intrusive solution to the Gunston overcrowding than moving kids from the walkable neighborhood school that you promised to our community just a few years ago. The health of children in our and surrounding neighborhoods depends on your ability to think creatively and formulate a more logical solution.

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4908

I am writing to reaffirm the desire to move the Spanish Immersion Middle School from Gunston Middle School to the more centrally located Kenmore Middle School.

I recently learned that Williamsburg Middle School was proposed as a location for the Spanish Immersion Middle School Program. That proposal seems more inclined to defeat any productive effort to strengthen the Spanish Immersion Program because it is only moving the immersion school from the southern most middle school to the northern most middle school. The problem of a long commute that my family will consider four years from now when deciding whether to continue the Spanish Immersion Program would be just be transferred to families that are located at the southern end of the Arlington

County - the problem presented would not be solved. A centrally located middle school would be more convenient for students who live at both the southern and northern ends of the county.

I recognize that the decision to shift to Kenmore Middle School is not easy and there are moving parts and other view points under consideration. I ask that you also keep in mind that change is the only definitive constant and people change schools and school tracks all the time.

Thank you for considering the proposal of the centrally located Kenmore Middle School for the new middle school home of the Spanish Immersion Program.

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4739

My specific question is does potential boundary change affect children already attending DHMS regardless of current boundary? Thank you

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4731

Thank you for following up.

[redacted]

In terms of the walkability, per the map, it appears that most of the neighborhoods that abut Hamm will no longer be in the boundary zone. Student who live even several blocks from Hamm, will now be redirected to Williamsburg. So students who see this school from their homes will be bused elsewhere. The loss our community schools will dramatically negatively impact our community.

My [redacted] grade when this proposed change, if accepted, will go into affect. Will they be allowed to stay at Hamm?

Thank you for the clarification on this proposal.

How else can I engage with key decision makers on this proposal?

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SB

From Escuela PTA [attachment]

22. The transportation analysis in Appendix I to the Pre-CIP report assumed that ALL immersion students not in the walk zone for a given middle school would get an immersion bus if the immersion program were at that middle school.

23. Kenmore MS already has issues finding space for the buses it needs to serve the students assigned there and those buses face delays getting to and from the school, based on the challenging traffic situation around Kenmore. How would even more buses be accommodated in the space available at Kenmore? How would adding more buses impact the delay faced by school buses?

24. If moving MS immersion to Kenmore increases transportation costs, how will APS find the funding? Will APS further cut hub stops? Will APS have fewer neighborhood bus stops? a. If immersion is moved but Montessori remains at Gunston, will APS stop providing school bus service for Montessori MS students outside the Gunston assignment zone?

25. Walking and biking to Kenmore MS is notoriously dangerous: despite being located a quarter mile from excellent trails, that last quarter mile is dangerous. From the south, the sidewalks are dangerously narrow and often crowded - we have seen children hit by drivers as they walk to and from Kenmore. • What would APS do to make the route to walk and bike to Kenmore safer? • Would APS push Arlington County to create a safe path for walking and biking to Kenmore from the W&OD Trail? • Would APS work with Arlington County to create a safe walking and biking connection to Kenmore from S Manchester St and to improve the safest of people walking and biking across Route 50 at Manchester St? • Would APS push Arlington County to improve the Route 50 Trail so that it connects to Kenmore?

26. At the August 22 meeting, Planning staff said that Academic staff said that having two immersion MS programs would be problematic. Can you please elaborate what the problems would be? Would it increase costs? If so, by how much?

27. It seems like the only way to move the MS immersion program would be to move the entire program at once - students could not stay at Gunston for their 8th grade year and stay in immersion. Has APS thought of another way to move the program? Will APS acknowledge that such a move would be hard on some kids?

28. APS is proposing to move the immersion program out of Gunston, at least in part because of the capacity issues at Gunston, which are exacerbated by the planned growth in the area near Gunston (particularly National Landing). The area near Kenmore, particularly on the western end of Columbia Pike, is also planned to grow significantly in the coming years. Will the MS immersion program be forced to move out of Kenmore in the next few years? Will APS commit to not moving the MS immersion program again for a certain number of years?

29. What feedback have the immersion teachers given about moving the MS immersion program out of Gunston? What feedback have they given about moving the MS immersion program to Kenmore specifically? Has APS asked teachers about moving the MS immersion program to any other MS?

30. Will APS consider moving the MS Spanish Immersion program back to Williamsburg, where it was originally housed before it moved to Gunston?

31. If APS does move the Spanish immersion program to Kenmore, how do they plan to address the overcrowding as I understand this school is already very close to capacity?

32. Why doesn't APS have a long term plan in process for the Spanish Immersion Program? If this proposal goes through, it will be the third move for the same generation of kids and this negatively impacts children, parents, teachers and our community. It shows a total disregard for the people impacted by these changes.

33. If the MS program is not moved to Kenmore, then how does APS plan to address the overcrowding issue?



34. Is there data on which families stay in the MS program? Is the majority English speakers and families that live nearby?

35. When will families be notified about a program move.

36. If a student left the immersion program and is enrolled in the neighborhood school in 6th grade, could they return to the immersion school if they are moved to Kenmore or another closer one?

37. Is there any possibility of a Spanish immersion program at Dorothy Hamm Middle School?

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5102

Good afternoon,

Thank you for posting answers to School Board and community questions related to the potential move of the middle school (MS) immersion program. In this document, I particularly appreciated the chart below showing "cohort transition rates" (i.e. the percentage of students who attended Key or Claremont in 5th grade who continued with immersion at Gunston). Do you have data on the cohort transition rates between 5th grade and 6th grade broken out by assigned middle school (i.e. the percentage of students who attended Key in 5th grade, were assigned to Hamm MS, but continued with immersion at Gunston -- and then for Williamsburg instead of Hamm, Swanson instead of Hamm, etc).

Thank you!

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5054 and 5055

Good afternoon,

I am writing to express my disapproval of the proposed boundary changes and rezoning plan for Dorothy Hamm. My [redacted] grader has been walking to DHMS for the last two years and will continue to walk with my [redacted] grader this year.

We believe this proposal is an explicit contradiction to the County's commitment to families and to the population as a whole:

1. Arlington County Board Chair [Katie Cristol is quoted as saying](#), "We are committed, through many infrastructure projects and County-wide initiatives, to **continuing to make walking a viable**, enjoyable and safe way for both residents and visitors to get around Arlington."
2. We specifically purchased our house in the [redacted] neighborhood so our kids could walk to Dorothy Hamm. The County made pledges to the [redacted] to keep a middle school within our walking zone, and for good reason. Come by the school between 7:20 and 7:40 and you'll see an endless stream of middle schoolers walking to DHMS. **Our neighborhood is committed to taking advantage of DHMS's walkability.**

3. Our kids have been walking to school since kindergarten and have always participated in [Walk, Bike and Roll](#) days. How can the County promote initiatives like these then turn around and bus kids **away** from a school that's ½ mile from their house?

We believe the County needs to reassess its proposal and let kids who can walk to DHMS continue to walk to DHMS. It's counter-intuitive to do otherwise.

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5060

When is the virtual community table session on the middle school boundary proposal and immersion program move being held since the 5 september session was postponed?

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5064

Attached please find a letter to the Arlington Public Schools (APS) Board from the DRCA. Kindly confirm receipt.

Thank you.

[attachment]

Dear Arlington School Board Members:

On behalf of the Executive committee of the Donaldson Run Civic Association (DRCA) we are writing to bring to your attention concerns raised by DRCA members about the pre-Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) report, as it relates to the draft middle school boundary proposal.

Six years ago, APS determined to return the old Stratford/HB Woodlawn site to a neighborhood middle school. The key consideration in doing so was the well-established factor of proximity to the neighborhood. In this connection, APS assured the neighbors that traffic to the new school would be minimized since a great many since a great many students would be walkers. Our belief is that proposal being considered now goes back on this commitment and, thus, does not promote community trust. Dozens of residents of Donaldson Run, both those with school-aged children and those without, have weighed in with APS on the many benefits of walking to school and the adverse impact of additional buses, parent-driven students and much earlier student wake-up times. We were distressed to learn that 90% of the middle schoolers who would shift from Hamm to Williamsburg under the pre-CIP report are currently in the Hamm walk zone.

We also feel that before making any significant boundary change, APS should avail itself the most current data. As we understand it, final school counts will not be available until the end of this month and there are preliminary indications that Williamsburg has a higher student count than initially believed. In evaluating this data, APS should seek and implement the most creative solutions to achieve its stated criteria, especially proximity. Surely, there must be ways of easing crowding at Gunston while increasing capacity at Williamsburg without creating such burdensome dislocation for the many students currently thriving in Hamm's supportive community.

We endorse the position of the County Council of PTAs, which recommends opening targeted voluntary transfers to shift students from overcrowded schools to those that are under capacity.

Finally, projected future enrollments at Arlington's schools are just that – projections. These estimates can and have proven to be inaccurate over time. Indeed, just several years ago Arlington opened two new elementary schools due to overcrowding but today is proposing to close one due to under capacity. Any change in boundary based on future estimated enrollments should only be taken with the utmost prudence, while retaining flexibility to adapt to unforeseen future circumstances.

For all these reasons, we ask that you consider less detrimental alternatives to the middle school boundary proposal in the pre-CIP report. Further, we look forward to your continued discussions with Donaldson Run residents over the coming weeks on this most important matter.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our views.

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5068

Dear School Board Members

I am a parent of [redacted] at Key Elementary and wanted to share my views on the potential move of the MS immersion program.

I am a native Spanish speaker originally from Peru and greatly value the benefits of bilingualism. Moving the program to a more central location would allow kids in north Arlington to continue with the program, cut their commute, and allow them to participate in after school activities at their MS. The current location of the MS immersion is too far even for south Arlington families. Additionally, there is a very real concern with the overcrowding of the MS plus the fact that the population near Gunston is expecting to grow even more.

There are many Hispanic families that also live in North Arlington. However, many families don't continue with the program due to distance and the time the kids have to get up to catch a very early bus to the other side of the county.

I have heard that some of the families affected by the potential move to Kenmore have complained and suggested to move the program to Williamsburg. Although Williamsburg is closer to my home (we are zoned to Swanson), I know it would not be good for the program overall as it would put a major strain on transportation as most kids would need to be bused to the farthest edge of North Arlington.

I am sympathetic to parents complaints about MS neighborhood schools, but I also know that if we care about the program we would make sure it serves well all kids in Arlington that participate in it.

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5069

Good evening,

In the absence of information from APS on the MS immersion move, rumors are flying. Some claim that APS is seriously considering moving MS immersion to Williamsburg.

Such a move would placate the families that don't want MS boundaries changed now, but would impose long term costs on APS.

As Appendix I to the Pre CIP report made clear, putting immersion at Williamsburg would have increased transportation costs and would be inequitable. Williamsburg is surrounded by low density, wealthy neighborhoods and is poorly served by transit. APS would have to spend more every year to bus immersion kids to Williamsburg. Lower income families would have greater challenges continuing with immersion in that location.

I understand that families facing boundaries are scared and passionate. Change is always hard.

That said, APS should not create ongoing challenges for years to come to avoid change today.

I urge you to NOT move the MS immersion program to Williamsburg.

Thank you for your time and consideration

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5125

This email is to protest the idea that APS might be seriously considering moving MS immersion to Williamsburg.

Such a move would placate the families that don't want MS boundaries changed now, but would impose long term transportation costs on APS.

Putting immersion at Williamsburg would have increased transportation costs and would be inequitable. Williamsburg is surrounded by low density, wealthy neighborhoods and is poorly served by transit, as Appendix I to the Pre CIP report made clear. APS would have to spend more every year to bus many more immersion kids to Williamsburg than are currently bused to Gunston or Kenmore. Lower income families would have greater challenges continuing with immersion in that location.

APS should not create ongoing challenges for years to come to avoid change today.

I urge you to NOT move the MS immersion program to Williamsburg. Keep the immersion program at Gunston.

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5070

In the absence of information from APS on the MS immersion move, rumors are flying. Some claim that APS is seriously considering moving MS immersion to Williamsburg.

Such a move would placate the families that don't want MS boundaries changed now, but would impose long term costs on APS.

As Appendix I to the Pre CIP report made clear, putting immersion at Williamsburg would have increased transportation costs and would be inequitable. Williamsburg is surrounded by low density, wealthy neighborhoods and is poorly served by transit. APS would have to spend more every year to bus

immersion kids to Williamsburg. Lower income families would have greater challenges continuing with immersion in that location.

I understand that families facing boundaries are scared and passionate. Change is always hard.

That said, APS should not create ongoing challenges for years to come to avoid change today.

I urge you to NOT move the MS immersion program to Williamsburg.

If it has to move, Kenmore is more centrally located but that road is extremely dangerous and cramped and would not be able to handle increased transportation and accidents would certainly increase.

Thank you for your time and consideration

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5073

Will APS be releasing a revised middle school boundary proposal on Sept. 15? I know that had previously been the plan, but it is no longer listed on your website.

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5075

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the decision to move the Spanish immersion program from Gunston Middle School to Kenmore Middle School.

While I understand the need for changes and improvements within our school district, I believe that this particular move does not genuinely address the concerns of families seeking a more central location.

The decision to relocate the program to Kenmore Middle School was expected to provide a more central option for families like mine who were looking for greater accessibility within the county. However, upon closer examination, it appears that this move may not achieve the intended goal. Kenmore Middle School, may not significantly benefit families who were seeking a more centrally located option.

I kindly request that the Arlington County School Board reconsider this decision and evaluate whether there are alternative solutions that can better address the needs of families seeking a more central location for the Spanish immersion program. This program is of great importance to our community, and it is crucial that its relocation truly serves the best interests of all involved.

I, along with many other families, want the best educational opportunities for our children and believe that finding a suitable location for the Spanish immersion program is essential in achieving this goal.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to a fruitful discussion on how we can best serve the needs of our community.

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5088

Dear Dr. Durán,

I have [redacted] at Escuela Key [redacted] and I am writing in support of relocating the Middle School immersion program to a more central location and I believe Kenmore MS is a good choice.

I am a native Spanish speaker and my kids are too. We are deeply committed to the program and we were relocated from Claremont to Key when the boundaries changed last year. I cannot tell you enough about how our family's quality of life has improved just from being in a closer school. We are able to participate more in school activities and being part of a community. Thus, moving the MS immersion program is a big priority for our family so we can continue on the immersion path.

Same is true for many families at Escuela Key. Our Escuela Key community is more challenged by the location of the MS immersion program at Gunston. For example, today there are only 49 students enrolled in 6th grade at Gunston from the 102 who graduated last year from 5th grade at Escuela Key. That's less than 50%. Previous years are no better. Only 19 Spanish speaking students continued this year from that cohort. That is our EL students, who benefited the most from the program are dropping out after 5th grade. We need to address the issues impacting those families and moving the program to a more central campus would help to lower that attrition from our school.

There are many other reasons why the program should be relocated out of Gunston to a more central location. Among them:

1. A more central location would give a better and more equitable access to families across the county.
2. The visioning process recommended to move the program to a more central location to reduce attrition from 5th to 6th grades. Furthermore, the elementary school boundary committee also noted the challenge for many families to continue in the program due to the extreme location of the program at the edge of the county.
3. Although, there is a Hub stop system in place for transportation, it is very costly to transport kids from one edge to the county to the other. A more central location would help to reduce transportation time and potentially costs.
4. A more central location such as Kenmore would place the program closer to Spanish-speaking families which would lower attrition from this group and would allow the program to grow.
5. Gunston is overcrowded and projected to grow in the years to come. Moving immersion from Gunston can help to alleviate this issue.
6. A program placed at edge of the county prevents many families to even apply at the Elementary school level as they see impossible for their families to stay in the immersion program for MS and HS. I know many families like this. A more central location will increase interest on the program of many families that don't even consider it now.

As you can see, there are plenty of reasons to move forward with this reallocation to a more central campus like Kenmore. Although there are many voices you have to hear during this process, please remain committed to the success of the immersion program and do what is right for it: relocating the MS immersion program to a more central location and give more equal access to families across the county.

Thank you!

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5106

Dear Arlington County School Board,

I am a mother of [redacted] Gunston Immersion [redacted] went through the Spanish Immersion program at Claremont and are planning to continue the program at Wakefield.

I was concerned to see the announcement that APS is considering moving the middle school program out of Gunston. I understand the reasons for it: 1) to locate it in a more central area so that more families have access to the program, and 2) to ease overcrowding at Gunston. I understand these reasons, and agree that they are important. So, if the program does have to move, I think a really strong data analysis needs to be done to find the best location for the move. I am concerned about moving the program to Kenmore due to the huge challenge with transportation and traffic there, and lack of access to bike trails, as well as the impact on increased buses that would be needed at an already crowded pick-up/drop-off area. However, I understand that Kenmore is more centralized than Gunston, so if it is the best location then I would support it.

However, I've been hearing that some parents are advocating that the program move to Williamsburg Middle School. This would be a terrible idea for the program as Williamsburg is NOT a central location, is far from most native Spanish speaking families in the County, is far from most of the current immersion students, and is not close to public transportation options. I strongly urge you to NOT move the program to Williamsburg.

It seems that Thomas Jefferson Middle School seems like a better option to locate the immersion program than even Kenmore, but it seems to have been discounted without much good explanation. I strongly urge you to do a thorough analysis of the pros and cons of moving to Thomas Jefferson, which seems like it could be one of the best options that many families would be happy with.

Our family is strongly committed to the Spanish Immersion Program and want to see it continue to thrive. Therefore, I think that any move needs to be supported by very thoughtful and thorough analysis of data and impacts, and the analysis that has been done so far to choose Kenmore as the best option doesn't seem to be robust. Please consider doing a more thorough analysis and also thinking long-term to determine the best option now so that another move doesn't need to happen again in a few years.

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4927

I wanted to reiterate my points made below, but also add that moving the immersion to Williamsburg would be a disaster.

Part of the point of moving the program is a more central location for everyone since it's a county wide program. Williamsburg is as far north as Gunston is south, so this potential move would just create more issues.

One of the points of the immersion program is to include native spanish speakers. There are none at Williamsburg, and busing ELL to Williamsburg would be counterproductive. The amount of ELL kids who are also immigrants and are lower on the socio-economic spectrum will stick out like sore thumbs with the Williamsburg population. They are much more likely to be bullied and drop out of the program due to their socio-economic status.

There are no kids districted for Wakefield from Williamsburg. So by putting the immersion kids at Williamsburg you are isolating them as their own population. The amount of overlap from Claremont/key to Williamsburg will be low, and the amount of non-immersion kids from Williamsburg to Wakefield will be almost zero. There will be at least some overlap with immersion and general ed students from Kenmore, which helps with social integration.

Overall, moving immersion to Williamsburg will be a complete disaster. Please move the program to Kenmore instead, which makes complete sense in so many ways. Here is my original email again:

I am a parent of a [redacted] Claremont kid and a [redacted] Gunston kid, both in the immersion program. I am writing to encourage you to please move the immersion program to Kenmore! I know there are several people who are complaining very loudly about moving the immersion program, but there are a lot of us who are fine or would embrace the program moving to Kenmore.

First, we are in the TJ Middle school district, so you will be busing my kid to a middle school somewhere. It makes no difference to me if you bus them to Gunston or Kenmore (or TJ). Gunston is insanely overcrowded and will continue to be overcrowded, plus only getting worse, due to natural population growth in the South and in the immersion program. Moving immersion allows for Gunston to better support growth, and for better growth in immersion. There are more ELLs at Kenmore, which would provide more opportunities to have ELL students in spanish immersion classes, helping them learn english and keep their spanish skills.

Kenmore is easier to get to from a driving perspective and more centrally located, making it a much better fit for immersion.

Please move the Immersion program to Kenmore!

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5088

Dear Dr. Durán and Board Members of Arlington Public Schools,

We are writing to you today to express our support of relocating the Middle School Spanish immersion program to a more centrally located school in the county that will allow for this program to grow and evolve. We believe the best choice is Kenmore Middle School.

As background, We have two children (1st and 2nd grade) in Escuela Key. We are primarily a Spanish speaking household. My wife Lizette was born and raised in Mexico, and our children have spoken Spanish at home since birth. We are deeply committed to the immersion program. It is the main reason why we reside in Arlington County.

We believe there are three main reasons why you should consider Kenmore Middle School for the middle school immersion program.



**First, it provides more equitable access to families across the county so they can more fully participate in school activities.** We have experience with this. When our oldest child was in kindergarten, we were actually zoned for Claremont. We felt disconnected from the rest of the school community and it was difficult to be present the way we wanted. However, last year the boundaries changed and we are now in Escuela Key. Not only was that change beneficial in cutting down our commute time, but it has allowed us to devote more time to the school community. We are very active in the PTA, afterschool activities, and partnering with teachers to provide cultural enrichment to students and share our family's Mexican heritage. We feel like Gunston Middle School would be a rehash of the same experience we had at Claremont.

**Second, we want this program to grow.** Gunston middle school is already crowded and projected to grow even more, making it less hospitable to grow the immersion program. Kenmore helps alleviate this issue. However, we also need to increase interest in continuing the program, and the distance for some families is an issue. Moving the middle school program to Kenmore would place the immersion program closer to Spanish-speaking families and cut down on attrition from elementary to middle school. For example, this school year (2023-24) less than half the students who graduated 5th grade last year from Escuela Key are enrolled in 6th grade at Gunston (49 students out of 102). Only 19 Spanish speaking students continued.

**Third, Kenmore will cut transportation costs.** It is very costly to transport kids from one edge of Arlington County to the other. A more central location would help to reduce transportation time and potentially costs.

We are very dedicated to the immersion program and believe it is one of the benefits of Arlington Public Schools. We want to work with you to find a solution that benefits all children from every part of the county, and we believe moving the immersion middle school program to Kenmore is the best way to do that.

Thank you for your time and consideration.