

December 2, 2019

To: School Board Members and APS Staff

cc: APS Elementary School PTAs, Arlington County Civic Associations

From: Mac Mirchandani – Arlington resident and elementary school parent

APS has stated several goals with the current Elementary school planning process that are driving the current decision making, including:

- A. Keep as many students together in each school community as possible
- B. Enable walking to neighborhood schools as much as possible
- C. Use all existing elementary schools to full capacity
- D. Meet anticipated need for seats in high-growth areas

In order to assess how the two APS proposals for school moves achieve these goals, I have calculated how many students will move, walkability, capacity, and the seats created in high-growth areas for the 3 APS proposals. In addition, I am sharing four alternative scenarios that I have created that do a better job at meeting APS's stated goals. The four alternative scenarios are:

- 1) **Key → ATS → Nottingham:** This scenario involves closing Nottingham, moving ATS to the Nottingham building, moving Key to the ATS building, and opening new neighborhood school at Key.
- ★ 2) **Key → ATS → Tuckahoe:** This scenario involves closing Tuckahoe, moving ATS to the Tuckahoe building, moving Key to the ATS building, and opening new neighborhood school at Key.
- 3) **Key → Long Branch:** This scenario involves closing Long Branch, moving Key to the Long Branch building, and opening a new neighborhood school at Key.
- ★ 4) **Key → Tuckahoe:** This scenario involves closing Tuckahoe, moving Key to the Tuckahoe building, and opening a new neighborhood school at Key.

Each of these alternative scenarios achieves better results than the APS proposals and deserve attention. In particular, the results achieved through the two scenarios that involve closing Tuckahoe -- Alternative 2 and Alternative 4 -- appear to be most aligned with APS' stated goals in addition to delivering vastly superior results. They yield about the same number of students moving, more open capacity in Zone 2, more walkers and fewer buses – freeing up funding that could be redirected towards educational programs.

I wish to emphasize that I am not targeting a particular school for closure; my conclusion is based on an analysis of current enrollment data, school capacities, and APS' statement of need for increased capacity in the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor. I believe that APS, as the steward of significant public resources, has an obligation to engage in a transparent and data-driven process that arrives at the best possible solution, for the benefit of current residents and taxpayers, but most of all for our children.

I respectfully submit these proposals for consideration and evaluation, and I request a response to these proposals from APS by 12/9, advising on whether and how these proposals might be included in APS' ongoing community engagement efforts. The tables on the following pages compare results across the different scenarios. I also included a link to an Excel file showing planning unit assignments for each scenario so that they can be plugged into APS models easily and quickly.

Lastly – in order to get ahead of what is your likely oft repeated response – that you will tackle these as part of the Phase 2 boundary work – I have gone the extra step of mapping out how a follow on boundary scenario would affect results. This follow on boundary change to APS existing proposals only serves to drive down the results even further – as you can see in the Appendix.

I (along with most PTAs and community associations) continue to urge APS to evaluate the results of their proposals in concert with the Phase II boundary changes – and slow this process down so that the right decision can be made for our children across the county. It is clear from our analysis that the initial 3 proposals from APS will not yield as favorable results once the boundary changes are in place – and will result in costly errors and taxpayer implications in the future.

Please reach out to Mac Mirchandani [REDACTED] if you have any further questions on these scenarios. I look forward to hearing back at this same email address.

Mac Mirchandani
[REDACTED]

Aggregated results across scenarios – Best 3 values in each row are highlighted in green:

	APS's Scenarios			Alternative Proposals w/ Better Results			
	Representative Boundary Scenario	Proposal 1 – Pre-Boundary Move	Proposal 2 – Pre-Boundary Move	Key → ATS → Nottingham	Key → ATS → Tuckahoe	Key → Long Branch	Key → Tuckahoe
Keep as many students together in each school community as possible:							
Number of neighborhood students moving to a new school/community (calculated from APS data file posted) ¹	4020	2982	3143	3280	3003	2752	3003
Number of neighborhood students moving to a new school/community (As currently stated on the APS Engage web site) ²	"more than 4000"	"more than 2400"	"more than 2100"				
Number of schools that would have more than 23% of students move to a new neighborhood school ³	11	6	6	10	8	7	8
Enable walking to neighborhood schools as much as possible:							
Total number of Walkers	4093	4697	4969	4779	5053	4630	5053
Total number of Bus Eligible	6456	5852	5580	5770	5496	5919	5496
Use all existing elementary schools to full capacity:							
Number of schools over 98% Capacity	8	1	6	0	0	0	0
Number of schools over 100% Capacity	5	1	4	0	0	0	0
Number of schools at less than 70% Capacity	5	2	3	1	0	0	0
Meet needs for seats in high-growth areas:							
Available capacity in high growth Zone 2	361	276	304	571	520	357	520
Additional Factors Cited:							
Number of option school's moving	0	2	3	2	2	1	1
Number of attendance zones that are split into two units	1	not stated	not stated	0	0	0	0
Number of neighborhood schools located outside of their boundary	1	not stated	not stated	0	0	0	0
Is Immersion in a central location?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

¹ https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Planning-Unit-Level-Data_Nov_22_2019.xlsx

² <https://www.apsva.us/engage/planning-for-2020-elementary-school-boundary-process/>

³ 23% was chosen because in the APS proposals, 23% of McKinley students would be split up and not move with the rest of the students over to Reed – hence 23% appears to be an allowable threshold of school community separation per APS

Appendix: How do the APS proposals fare after a Phase II boundary change?

The existing APS proposals provide an incomplete picture of where the two move proposal scenarios end up. For instance, with just these moves and without any further boundary changes, APS would still have several schools over 100% capacity, as well as some well under 70% of capacity, resulting in sub-optimal use of fixed assets.

I have taken the further step of running through the various possible boundary change permutations possible from these 2 proposals – I have chosen to maximize for the number of walkers and minimize for the number of students changing schools while optimizing for capacity use across the county. This has yielded the two extension scenarios I will label:

- Proposal 1 – Post Boundary Move Phase II: Where we took APS’s proposal 1 and conducted the necessary boundary changes to support it; and
- Proposal 2 – Post Boundary Move Phase II: Same as above for APS’s proposal 2

I have included these here for a true comparison to my proposed alternate scenarios – all of which yield results that are significantly better than the 3 APS proposals.

Aggregated results across scenarios – Best 3 values in each row are highlighted in green:

	APS's Scenarios			APS Scenarios w/ Boundary Changes Applied		Alternative Proposals w/ Better Results			
	Representative Boundary Scenario	Proposal 1 – Pre-Boundary Move	Proposal 2 – Pre-Boundary Move	Proposal 1 – Post Boundary Move Phase II	Proposal 2 – Post Boundary Move Phase II	Key[] ATSU Nottingham	Key[] ATSU Tuckahoe	Key[] Long Branch	Key[] Tuckahoe
Keep as many students together in each school community as possible:									
Number of neighborhood students moving to a new school/community	4020	2982	3143	3007	3464	3280	3003	2752	3003
*note - these are the numbers stated on the APS site which do not match what is in the files APS sent out		more than 2400	more than 2100						
Number of schools that would have more than 23% of students move to a new neighborhood school	11	6	6	8	9	10	8	7	8
Enable walking to neighborhood schools as much as possible:									
Total number of Walkers	4093	4697	4969	4589	5086	4779	5053	4630	5053
Total number of Bus Eligible	6456	5852	5580	5960	5463	5770	5496	5919	5496
Use all existing elementary schools to full capacity:									
Number of schools over 98% Capacity	8	1	6	0	2	0	0	0	0
Number of schools over 100% Capacity	5	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Number of schools at less than 70% Capacity	5	2	3	0	3	1	0	0	0
Meet needs for seats in high-growth areas:									
Available capacity in high growth Zone 2	361	276	304	248	270	571	520	357	520
Additional Factors Cited:									
Number of option school's moving	0	2	3	2	3	2	2	1	1
Number of attendance zones that are split into two units	1	not stated	not stated	not stated	not stated	0	0	0	0
Number of neighborhood schools located outside of their boundary	1	not stated	not stated	not stated	not stated	0	0	0	0
Is Immersion in a central location?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

An excel file showing the PU assignments can be found here:
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1D13DHGIXRfPCWVHiOs8YLo3Ndf6S_YdJ