

**Francis Scott Key School PTA**  
**ErinFras-Smith, President (president@keypta.org)**

November 10, 2020

Dear Dr. Durán and School Board Members,

On behalf of the Key community, I would like to point out several concerning issues that we noticed in the slides accompanying the [Superintendent's recommendation](#) for the Fall 2020 Elementary School Boundary Process, presented on November 5, 2020.

**Slide 19: Community engagement at Woodbury Park Apartments.**

The slide states that APS Staff spoke with 20 residents, of whom 12 were Key families. Woodbury Park families, surprised by such a statement, further investigated and were told that APS staff had conducted an unannounced visit and spoke with those who happened to be picking up free groceries from AFAC. While those conversations provided some insight, they would not qualify as rigorous community engagement. In 1997, the Center for Disease Control published which is still being used today by many government entities. It defines Community Engagement as "

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states that "

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An unannounced visit to a community during food distribution is not good Community Engagement. First, it does not inform the community of the possibility to engage and therefore prepare. Second, it only engages a specific slice of the population; not all Woodbury Park families utilize AFAC services. Third, it does not take into consideration the dangerous and avoidable power dynamic between government staff and respondents from a low-income community in the vulnerable position of picking up free goods. We are concerned that this type of unannounced outreach is being used as a shortcut to tick the "Hispanic outreach" box. This is the second time that APS staff has done an unannounced drop-by of the Woodbury Park community in connection with a similar distribution of services. In the Fall of 2019, there was an unannounced visit during a free school supply give away. In that instance, a Key parent tried to engage, and they refused to speak with him when he stated his disagreement with the then-proposed school moves. At the November 5th School Board meeting, the Woodbury Park representative who spoke in Spanish on behalf of many families stated: "

(" I would like to know how APS communicates with the community, as at no time have we been informed that they would come to take information that is

subsequently used to make very important decisions. We would prefer that you'd announce your presence beforehand, so we could be present and give our opinions, instead of taking the opinion of of c

Contrary to the statement on Slide 10 of the November 5 presentation, Key Immersion is a large part of this boundary process. Key's boundaries depend on the boundaries of its feeder schools. Moving planning units from Ashlawn to ASFS will transfer students from the Claremont feeder zone to the Key feeder zone. Moreover, APS has indicated that they intend to propose further changes to the boundaries of which students go to Key Immersion to include the ATS building in those boundaries.

Throughout this process, APS has refused to engage with Key Immersion on these issues and has not answered questions about whether Claremont students who live in planning units that change from the Claremont feeder zone to the Key feeder zone will be forced to transfer to Key.

Moreover, one alternative that has been discussed by many in the community is a pause to this entire process, keeping schools with the current boundaries and locations until Fall 2022. One of the primary differences between the recommended boundaries and the pause option is precisely that Key Immersion remains at 98% capacity with relocatables instead of moving to a building where it is at 111% capacity with relocatables.<sup>1</sup> We understand that the pause option is not preferred by staff. It is, however, the natural alternative that the School Board is choosing between, and staff should be honest and transparent about the choice in front of them.

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