

**Redistricting Public Hearing  
December 8, 2016**

November 30, 2016

Dear Members of the Alexandria City School Board,

We, the undersigned, write to express our dismay and disappointment that Maps 7 and 9 currently under consideration as part of the ACPS redistricting process would move our children who currently attend Samuel Tucker Elementary School, as part of Planning Block 22, to Patrick Henry Elementary School.

As residents of Hillwood Townhomes and Condominiums on South Pickett Street and Brigadoon on Gretna Green, we strongly believe Maps 7 and 9 create unnecessary instability for our children and do not subscribe to the very criteria the redistricting committee established. We favor Map 8 as the best option.

What follows is an outline of our concerns:

**Maps 7 and 9 Go Directly Against Several Redistricting Criteria**

- The redistricting criteria states one of its goal is to *"minimize need for bus transportation or travel time."* Hillwood and Brigadoon are 0.3-0.4 miles away from Samuel Tucker Elementary, whereas we are 1.5 miles away from Patrick Henry Elementary. If the city wants to promote neighborhood schools, why create a boundary that increases travel time, thereby adding to traffic congestion on Duke Street during the morning rush; adds more buses to Duke Street in the morning and afternoon; and forces children out of the school they live nearest to? Moreover, we frequently do take advantage of the option to walk our children to and from school.

Given that the city recently made pedestrian improvements at the intersection of Edsall Road and South Pickett Street (the intersection just west of Tucker), we know that the city understands and appreciates the importance of establishing walkable neighborhoods with easy access to key points such as schools. We hope the school board will commit to this goal as well.

It seems Maps 7 and 9 would create the exact opposite scenario of what is intended; some Tucker children who live closest can't attend their neighborhood school. Why would this be acceptable for children in Planning Block 22, but not others?

- The criteria states that redistricting aims to create *sensible and fair boundary lines by considering "the proximity to the school, and to extent possible, look for natural points to define boundaries."* Given South Pickett and Gretna Green's proximity to Samuel Tucker, making South Pickett Street the boundary cutoff just doesn't make sense, while Planning Blocks much farther from South Pickett to the west of Van Dorn Street would be zoned to Tucker.
- What is the plan for the new developments being built on South Pickett? If they would be zoned to Tucker, it would appear ACPS is abandoning the committed

families at Hillwood and Brigadoon who currently support the school in favor of those who have yet to move in the neighborhood.

**Modified Calendar:**

Families in Planning Block 22 who attend Tucker are vested in the school's modified calendar. We believe it makes Tucker a unique school within ACPS, and families here should not be penalized by being upended to a school with a traditional calendar.

**Grandfather Option:**

We are aware the school board postponed its decision on which grades would be grandfathered in as part of redistricting. We believe all Tucker students should be grandfathered in, not just 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders.

**Conclusion:**

We understand the school board has a very tough decision to make, but we, the parents of Hillwood and Brigadoon, implore you to recognize that Maps 7 and 9 go against the very criteria set forth and that either would be the wrong choice for our children. Map 8 is the best option. By implementing Map 8, Tucker would remain the rich, diverse school it is; Map 8 puts Tucker at the same live-in utilization as Maps 7 and 9; families already vested in Tucker's modified calendar remain; and our elementary aged children aren't unnecessarily placed in a school that is not in the neighborhood they live.

Sincerely,

Kellee Edmonds  
Catalina Rojas  
Craig Zelizer  
Heidi Combs-Janda  
Ryan Janda  
Jenny Paul  
Name  
Name  
Name

Cc: Bryan Bender (via email)  
Robert Fobian (via email)