

We, the Lake Claire community, thank the demographers, Board of Education, and APS administration for listening to many of the concerns raised by APS communities about the redistricting process. While Option A clearly does not answer the concerns of all communities, we support elements of this option and prefer it to Option B for the reasons set forth below. In a spirit of ongoing dialog, we ask that you continue to invest in the success of the Mary Lin, Inman, and Grady communities by:

- a) **Keeping Mary Lin K-5;**
- b) **Providing the SPLOST-funded addition/renovation of Mary Lin; and**
- c) **Maintaining Mary Lin's current feeder pattern with Inman Middle & Grady High.**

#### **KEEPING MARY LIN K-5 IS INVESTING IN SUCCESS.**

- Mary Lin is one of the top performing schools in the city, and is in the top 10% of elementary schools state-wide.
- Mary Lin's environment of excellence is the result of an overwhelming commitment by Mary Lin communities to APS and to our community school. Candler Park and Lake Claire have been part of the Mary Lin community since 1929; Inman Park joined the community almost a generation ago. Very few school-aged children in the Mary Lin communities attend private schools. Of those children attending APS schools, 96% attend Mary Lin, not schools in other zones, and not charters.
- Parents continuously roll up their sleeves to maintain the environment of excellence at Mary Lin, volunteering thousands of hours to the school each year and supporting the school through the PTA and the community-funded Mary Lin Education Foundation.
- Splitting the Kirkwood neighborhood to use Toomer to relieve over-crowding at Mary Lin and to avoid spending SPLOST funds at Mary Lin would be an inefficient allocation of resources, especially when a renovation will still be needed at Mary Lin. Staffing and instructional changes, increased numbers of crossing guards, duplicated or extended bus routes, and more would be funded through operating funds in the face of a \$60 million deficit when SPLOST funds are already allocated to Mary Lin.
- Splitting Mary Lin and Toomer into grade centers would result in a loss of walkability for half of the student population at each center, when we value the long-term health benefits of walking and biking for our children.

#### **ADDING CAPACITY AT MARY LIN IS A "PROMISE KEPT."**

- Lake Claire and the rest of the Mary Lin community voted twice to support SPLOST.
- SPLOST III and SPLOST IV allocated funds to Mary Lin for renovation and addition.
- Mary Lin last had a major renovation in 1994, almost 20 years ago.
- The entire 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades attend school in trailers; we have outgrown our space; and some areas of the current building need repair or updating.
- Mary Lin has never received SPLOST funds. Out of 58 currently open elementary schools, Mary Lin is 1 of 7 that have received no SPLOST funding.
- We have been told for years that the project has been merely delayed and will still take place.

#### **PRESERVING OUR CHILDREN'S SAFE & EASY ACCESS TO THEIR SCHOOLS IS A TOP PRIORITY.**

- Children attending APS schools must have safe, efficient access to their schools.
- The CSX railroad corridor and MARTA line are a barrier to safe, efficient access due to limited north-south access points from Boulevard to the eastern City of Atlanta boundary line due to:
  - Tunnel-like crossings at Krog Street, Whitefoord/Oakdale, and Rocky Ford;
  - Major thoroughfares with elevated intersections at Boulevard and Moreland; and
  - No access across DeKalb Avenue at Arizona.
- DeKalb Avenue is a uniquely dangerous major thoroughfare with three narrow lanes that cannot be expanded and a center "suicide lane" with signals that periodically malfunction.
- Utilizing the existing resources of the Beltline and Path to route children to school is an efficient use of existing resources.

#### **ADDING INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE GRADY CLUSTER IS INVESTING IN SUCCESS.**

- The current Inman and Grady communities each have created and maintained an environment of excellence, resulting in demand that may exceed capacity if appropriate infrastructure is not maintained.
- APS is committed to and should create and maintain consistent feeder patterns for the Grady Cluster.
- APS must provide infrastructure necessary to handle current and future student populations.
- Enrollment projections show that new middle school facilities are needed in the Grady Cluster. APS should consider creative alternatives (like a 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Annex or 6<sup>th</sup>-Grade Academy or a K-8 model like that requested by Centennial Place), not removal of students from the cluster, to address overcrowding.
- SPLOST dollars should be spent where there is current need, not just anticipated need.
- APS should make certain that administrative transfers are allowed only at schools with space for all in-zone students, and we applaud the Superintendent's promise of an audit of administrative transfers.

We appreciate your continued consideration of our concerns as you work to create school zones that maximize the opportunity for every child to obtain a quality education. Thank you!