

Wheaton Woods PTA Statement 3/17/26

Wheaton Woods Elementary school students currently choose between Parkland, Argyle, and Loiederman Middle Schools (MSMC) and then choose between the DCC high schools, with the closest high school to our community being Wheaton HS. Historically, most of our students attend Parkland MS and continue to Wheaton HS. Our community was not intentionally engaged by MCPS during the Woodward Boundary Study, despite MCPS knowing the language and cultural challenges for families at Wheaton Woods. Almost all previous boundary scenarios had our school remaining at Wheaton High School. MCPS could easily see how little our community participated in the survey during the boundary study: the Wheaton cluster submitted fewer than 1/10 the number of responses that the Walter Johnson and Whitman Clusters did!

Wheaton Woods PTA representatives first learned four weeks ago that the Superintendent's Recommendation was to have our elementary community attend Woodward, a high school that is over four miles away, or a 30-minute drive without traffic. This could easily end up being an hour bus ride. Of course, school buses will be provided, but what will extracurricular participation and parent engagement look like? Wheaton High School is much closer for most students and families, including being walkable or bikeable in a pinch. Some in our community want our children to continue to attend Wheaton High School due to proximity and tradition. While some in our community do view a potential move to Woodward as a positive opportunity, the transportation logistics remain a concern. Additionally, students in the Wheaton Woods district would be the only students from Parkland MS to matriculate to Woodward under the Superintendent's recommendation. This is another crucial point that our community needs to gain clarity about and give feedback on.

When we were asked by the future Woodward Community how we feel about this new map, it was hard for us to say. We told Dr. Taylor, board members, and PTA leaders that most of our community DOES NOT KNOW about these changes. There are language barriers, and varying levels of tech savvy and literacy skills. And as we all are aware, given the current political environment, there are families in our community that are afraid to send an email or board testimony with their names attached. We asked Dr. Taylor and board members to visit our community and discuss these changes. Unfortunately, Dr. Taylor was not able to personally make a meeting and instead sent a staff member who dismissed our concerns. We thank Board Members Ms. Silvestre, Ms. Stewart, and Ms. Yang, who took the time to hear from our representatives and families. We do not think it is a coincidence that these three board members supported a resolution to have another hearing regarding these changes.

Our community needed more time to actually engage with MCPS, discuss the changes, and provide feedback. We are frustrated and discouraged that MCPS and some of the board members have decided that our feedback and engagement are not needed in this decision, which will greatly affect our children and community.