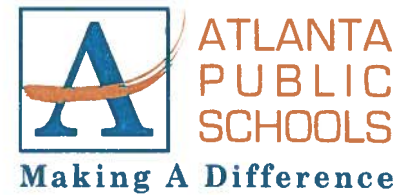


Meria Joel Carstarphen, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Phone: 404-802-2820
Fax: 404-802-1803



January 29, 2015

Dear Inman Middle School Community,

Since my arrival in Atlanta in July, I have heard a great deal about concerns of overcrowding at Inman Middle School. I understand that Atlanta Public Schools (APS) engaged the community in a conversation over the past couple of years around the need for additional capacity at Inman Middle School, leading to a decision in 2013 to build additional classrooms on the Inman campus. While we have been proceeding this year with the plan established under the previous administration, two recent developments have led us to delay our construction plans.

First, new enrollment projections released this month by our demographer reflect enrollment growth at Inman that is much higher than originally predicted. Next year's enrollment is projected to be 100 more students than we anticipated a year ago, with growing enrollment projected for the years beyond. The building addition planned for Inman was already tight with the original projections, but these latest numbers indicate that the additional classrooms would not accommodate the anticipated growth.

Second, you may have read recent media reports around the potential annexation of the Druid Hills community into Atlanta. While APS is not involved in this process and there are many unanswered questions, if the Druid Hills community chooses to pursue this path later this year, we would be faced with important decisions related to transitioning additional students and school buildings into the APS family and portfolio. Given the proximity of the Druid Hills community to the Grady Cluster, we want to be thoughtful about new construction projects until we have additional clarity around this issue.

With these developments, we believe it is necessary to take additional time to gather information and input from the community. In the meantime, it is our intent to bring in additional modular classrooms for the 2015-2016 school year to accommodate the increased enrollment projected for next school year until a more suitable long-term solution can be determined.

At the same time, we have been responding to concerns that the overcrowding issue may be a result of fraudulent enrollment. Our team has been reviewing enrollment records, and we recently brought on a residency verification officer to support the investigative work necessary to address these concerns. While there is a great deal of work ahead of us, the extent to which these efforts will relieve some of the overcrowding concerns is only part of the solution.

I understand that the Inman community has experienced a great deal of uncertainty around capacity planning over the last few years, and we appreciate your patience as we work to develop a long-term plan that meets the enrollment growth projected for your community. If you are interested in participating in a conversation around this topic and receiving an update on where we are, we invite you to come to a meeting with Principal Betsy Bockman, Chief Operating Officer Larry Hoskins, Associate Superintendent for Middle Schools Greg Middleton, Board Member Matt Westmoreland, and me on **Thursday, February 19 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the auditorium of Inman Middle School**. We look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Meria J. Carstarphen