

October 7, 2020

Fairfax County School Board
8115 Gatehouse Road, Suite 5400
Falls Church, VA 22042
Via Email



Re: Proposed Change to Admissions Policy for Thomas Jefferson High School

Dear School Board Members,

We are the U.S. Korean Association of Washington and represent Korean Americans in the greater Washington D.C. Area. The proposal to change the current race-blind and merit-based admission process to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, is deeply concerning to our community because it is based on racism disguised as diversity.

Thomas Jefferson High School is already diverse with students from immigrants from South Korea, Japan, India, Vietnam, Taiwan, Pakistan, China, and Thailand to name the few, each with the unique cultural and ethnic background. By categorizing them as “Asians” to justify the need for diversity, the Superintendent’s proposal is flawed and racially biased. The simple outcome of the proposal greatly increases the number of Caucasian students at the expense of so-called “Asian” students who have merited their attendance. We believe this race-based proposal is unconstitutional.

The Superintendent introduced this proposal without notice to the affected community or consulting any of our community leaders. Further alarming is the fact that, the proposal was introduced during the pandemic where suffering of the lives and livelihood continues even as we speak. Such actions amount to lack of transparency and build community’s mistrust of our elected officials.

Regardless of race and background, every American has right to pursue their American dream based on their hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence. Our children should inherit this value. The proposal to change Thomas Jefferson High School’s admission process deeply undermines the American value and the American dreams of our children.

As we build our coalition with the other community leaders, we ask all Board Members to vote against the Superintendent’s proposal to change Thomas Jefferson High School’s admission process, and help ensure that our children can pursue their American dreams without looking at the color of their skin. Moreover, any further review of the admissions process put on hold until our community has overcome the pandemic. Thank you.

Sincerely,
/James Daniel Shinn/
James Daniel Shinn
President
U.S. Korean Association of Washington

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