

September 14, 2026

Board of Education, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools
750 S. Merritt Mill Rd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

To the Board of Education:

We write to express concerns about the closure of Glenwood Elementary School and relocation of the STEAM² Dual Language and World Language Pathways in your district.

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) is a national nonprofit organization that advances the civil rights of Asian Americans through litigation, advocacy, and education. Our educational equity work focuses on race-conscious admissions and affirmative action, K-12 and higher education equity, language access for students and families, and combatting anti-Asian harassment.

We have reviewed the public hearings, board meetings, related materials, and votes related to the closure and consolidation decisions, and we are concerned about the Board's process.

First, N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-72(a)(1) requires a thorough study before a school board may close or consolidate schools, including an analysis of the inconvenience or hardship to affected students. Neither the school closure study presented on May 7 nor the July 16 program placement presentation includes this hardship analysis. The closure study acknowledges that the district cannot yet identify how many students will be impacted by school closure, pending redistricting. Instead, the report lists general factors for the redistricting process to consider. The July 16 presentation estimates how many students the consolidation plan will displace, but not the hardship or inconvenience to those students. The presentation also relies on pre-redistricting figures that the closure study itself flags as unreliable.

This omission reflects a broader pattern, not just a deficiency in the reports. The STEAM² program is a diverse and majority-minority program. Parents and students have testified that it provides an important cultural space for Asian American families in the district. Yet at several meetings, board members suggested there was not enough room to prioritize these families' needs. Framing this decision as zero-sum pits Asian American families against other communities for fixed resources and risks casting them as the source of the district's constraints.

AALDEF has long stood with other communities of color in the fight for educational opportunities. We recognize that the Board faces difficult decisions. We support outcomes that expand opportunity district-wide while honoring commitments made to Glenwood families. Relocating a magnet program can deepen the inequities it was built to address, but dissolving part of it outright would compound the harm done to these students, not resolve it.

We urge the Board to invest in what makes magnet programs more equitable—sustained outreach and recruitment, and curriculum that incorporates the cultures it serves—and to continue the STEAM² program. The Board can compensate for the lack of a hardship analysis by giving impacted families a true

say in decisions about staffing and continuity. We urge the Board to work with these communities as genuine partners in shaping this transition, rather than subjects of a decision the school community did not create.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jane Shim

Jane Shim

Director, Anti-Asian Violence Program

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

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August 31, 2026

School Board of Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools

Dr. Rodney Trice, Superintendent of Schools, Chapel-Hill Carrboro City Schools

Mr. Al Ciarochi Deputy Superintendent of Operations, Chapel-Hill Carrboro City Schools

Members of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Board of Education, Dr. Trice, and Mr. Ciarochi:

On behalf of the 1.1 million AANHPI (Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander) union members in the U.S., I write to express our concern about both the decision and the process surrounding the separation of the Mandarin Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Program from the Mandarin World Language Program (M-WL) in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools. We are also very concerned about the discussion at the Board Meeting of August 20, 2026, about dissolving the Mandarin World Language program, as well as conversations about removing the STEAM component of the STEAM2 program, after publicly-made promises were made to the Glenwood community that "programs would be preserved."

We have followed the debate and have been disappointed by the apparent indifference displayed by the board to the heightened sensitivities of the Chinese American community in your district. The history of Asian Americans (Chinese Americans in particular) in the U.S. is fraught with examples of bias and outright bigotry. Whether the community is "othered" because of their perceived differences or outright ignored because of a false perception that racial inequities do not exist in Asian communities, the result too often is to ignore the real needs for inclusion, understanding and dialogue with the area's Asian American community.

I write to you to extend the offer to have that dialogue to understand both the needs of that community and to also share in ways to create true multiracial strength that can only be achieved through that dialogue.

It is especially unfortunate that this decision is taking place in a time when anti-Asian violence is on the rise. Just this week, the [FBI released statistics](#) that show that while hate crimes declined overall, threats against Asian Americans, religious groups and immigrant communities persist.

In addition to the indifference to pain and harm to our communities, we also have serious questions about the inconsistent and sometimes arbitrary process employed to justify this decision. We will continue to monitor events on the ground closely and support the families both directly and indirectly who are affected by the decision to separate and effectively dismantle the programs.

We encourage you to express a true commitment to the Asian American community in your district and to facilitate dialogue with all communities. We will only build safe and thriving neighborhoods if we look out for the needs of the many.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mikayla Vu".

Mikayla Vu
APALA President

Cc: Officers, APALA