

## School Board Meeting Remarks

June 9, 2022

Topic: Parents as “non-essential”

My name is Amy Rzepka and I’m speaking on behalf of Arlington Parents for Education.

Tonight, I’m here on behalf of parents at two APS elementary schools who were recently informed that they were “non-essential adults” and could not participate in end of year celebrations or activities for the upcoming year.

According to these schools, there is a “directive” coming from APS to keep “non-essential adults” out of APS schools. It has been said this directive is coming from the top, Dr. Durán.

As a result, parents were not permitted on school grounds for kindergarten orientation unless they took additional Covid precautions other visitors were not required to take. For another school’s field day, parents were invited to stand outside the fence, off school grounds, to watch. It’s worth noting, I’m volunteering at my daughter’s APS field day tomorrow.

Meanwhile, on APS social media, parents can see outside adults going through their children’s schools regularly, including Dr. Durán, APS staff, members of the U.S. Senate, and video crews.

Are these visitors and video shoots more essential than parents? At some APS schools, parents have been invited inside all spring. Are parents at these schools more essential?

I was asked to speak tonight by parents who feel something is going wrong. Parents are hearing the message: APS doesn’t want or need us. As parents, we interpret this as, we don’t value you as a partner in your child’s education.

Dr. Durán has spoken many times about partnering with parents in their children’s education. Just yesterday he thanked parents in an APS email for volunteering to assist with year-end festivities.

We urge APS to be clear and consistent on this important message. Parents and educators aligned and working together is what’s truly essential.

Thank you.