

Date: July 10, 2020  
For ACTION  X  
For INFORMATION  X  
Board Agenda: Yes  x  
No     

**FROM:** Jennifer Abbruzzese, Director of Policy and Board Initiatives

**THROUGH:** Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

**TO:** The Honorable Cindy Anderson, Chair, and  
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

**TOPIC:** School Renaming Request: T.C. Williams High School

**ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:**

Goal 1: Systemic Alignment  
Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation  
Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

**SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:**

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity  
Focus Area 2: Budget Process  
Focus Area 3: High School Project  
Focus Area 5: Strategic Plan

**FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:**

Communications and Customer Service for External Stakeholders  
Communications and Customer Service for Internal Stakeholders  
Optimal and Equitable Learning Environments  
Mental and Social/Emotional Health

**SUMMARY:** On June 15, 2020, the School Board received a request to rename T.C. Williams High School that was accompanied by at least 100 signatures of Alexandria residents as required by Regulation FF-R. The newly proposed name is “Tubman-Chávez High School.” The rationale for the request is:

“T.C. Williams was a segregationist. Harriet Tubman was a black female freedom fighter and César Chávez was an important Latino civil rights activist...[They were] incredible Americans whose names would honor our high school while allowing it to keep the initials ‘T.C.’ They would provide representation to students who do not see their heritage adequately in Alexandria schools’ names...This name change can preserve most branding, allow students to still be part of ‘T.C.’, and remove this stain on our history.”

**BACKGROUND:**

[Policy FF](#) and [Regulation FF-R](#) outline the School Board’s authority to name and rename new and existing schools and other school division facilities. Renaming requests must be accompanied by supporting documentation, including 100 signatures of Alexandria residents.

Specifically, Section III. of Regulation FF-R provides that “the School Board may, at its discretion, consider requests to rename an existing school. The following procedure shall be followed when renaming an existing school to honor individuals or to recognize places or historical events for their contribution to the community or their impact on it.” Upon receipt of a valid request, Section III.B. directs the Board to determine whether it will vote “to pursue a request to rename an existing school.”

A vote to “pursue” the request is not a vote to rescind the current name and does not commit the Board to any future renaming. It is a vote that directs “the Superintendent [to] follow the naming process as outlined in Section I.” This includes initiating a robust public engagement process to solicit community nominations and/or voting, development of a timetable, cost estimates, a list of tasks required and a summary report by the Superintendent with recommendations to the Board (Reg. FF-R, Section I.). Once the Superintendent’s recommendations have been presented at a Board Meeting for information, a public hearing is required prior to any Board action to rename the school or facility.

In lieu of voting to “pursue a request,” other alternatives available to the Board include taking no action on a renaming request or voting to deny the request.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Superintendent recommends the Board consider the attached request to rename T.C. Williams High School.

**IMPACT:** Considering the attached renaming request aligns Board operations with Policy FF and Regulation FF-R and promotes equity and community engagement.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. School Renaming Request (6/15/20) with Supporting Petition/Signatures of Alexandria Residents (Regulation FF-R, Appendix A)
2. Alexandria City School Board Motion: Request to Rename T.C. Williams High School
3. School Board Policy FF: *Non-Sponsored Naming and Renaming of Schools and School Division Facilities*
4. Regulation FF-R: *Regulations for Non-Sponsored Naming and Renaming of Schools and School Division Facilities*

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