



The Identity Project

Phase II: Renaming Our Schools

Nov. 23, 2020, through July 1, 2021

Goal

To select new names for T.C. Williams High School and Matthew Maury Elementary School that are in keeping with ACPS' values and that have broad community support.



Equity for All 2025

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*Empowering all students to
thrive in a diverse and
ever-changing world.*

Phase II Identity Project Timeline

- » **Nov. 23, 2020:** Board voted to Re-name Williams and Maury schools
- » **Dec. 9, 2020-Jan. 8, 2021:** Student essay/poster campaign to propose name options.
- » **Jan. 13-Jan. 27, 2021:** first set of community polls where the public can view student submissions (on the ACPS website) for suggested names, and either choose a student submission or submit an alternative name.
Jan. 29, 2021: Data shared with Superintendent and Board Clerk to select the nine semi-finalists
- » **Feb. 5, 2021:** Semi-finalist lists were shared with the Board in a Board brief.
- » **Feb. 5-Feb. 19, 2021:** Second set of online community polls open with options to choose from nine names for each school.
- » **March 4, 2021:** Top three names for each school presented to the School Board for consideration and final selection.
- » **March 18, 2021:** Public Hearing on name recommendations
- » **April 8, 2021:** Action Item: School Board votes on new names
- » **July 1, 2021:** Implementation of the new names

Phase II-Poll Number Two Overview



Semi-Finalist Names Announced for the Renaming of T.C. Williams High School and Matthew Maury Elementary School

Through a robust community engagement process and vetted by the School Board clerk and superintendent, the semi-finalist names for each school were announced, and the last set of community polls were live from Feb. 5 through Feb. 19, 2021.

With **14,947 entries** from students, families, alumni, staff, and community members, we present the top names that had support in the polls, met the ACPS Board policies and were deemed suitable for naming a school. Careful consideration went into public opinion, suitability to the campus and student population, and our community.



Phase II Media Messaging



Phase II Events	# of Media Mentions & Media Stories	# of Facebook Posts	# of Instagram Posts	# of Twitter Messages	ACPS Express/ Insider
Student Essay Poster Submission Process (Dec. 9, 2020-Jan. 8, 2021)	17	3	4	2	3
First Renaming Polls (Jan. 13-Jan. 27, 2021)	31	3	3	1	3
Second Community Renaming Polls with Nine Semi-Finalist names (Feb. 5-Feb. 19, 2021)	41	7	4	4	3
Totals	89	13	11	7	9

Semi-Finalists: Poll Number Two

T.C. Williams High School

Semi-Finalist Names

Alexandria High School
Ruth Bader Ginsburg High School
Chinquapin High School
Blois Hundley High School
Petey Jones High School
King Street High School
Parker-Gray High School
Arnold J. Thurmond High School
Titan Community High School

Matthew Maury Elementary

Semi-Finalist Names

Sarah Kemp Brady Elementary School
Naomi Brooks Elementary School
Ruth Bader Ginsburg Elementary School
Katherine Johnson Elementary School
John Lewis Elementary School
Jean Reid Elementary School
Rosemont Park Elementary School
Russell Road Elementary School
Harriet Tubman Elementary School

Rationale for Narrowing to Three Finalists

The rationale for the superintendent's recommendation for the three finalists for each school are based on community support and how each one fits the goals from the ACPS strategic plan: *ACPS 2025: Equity for All*.

- » Systemic Alignment
- » Instructional Excellence
- » Student Accessibility & Support
- » Strategic Resource Allocation
- » Family and Community Engagement

Data From Semi-Finalist Polls

T.C. Williams High School



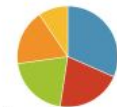
Poll interest from the community resulted in 8,602 entries to rename T.C. Williams High School.

Choices	Count	Percentage
Alexandria High School	2942	34.20%
Titan Community High School	1829	21.26%
Ruth Bader Ginsburg High School	871	10.13%
Arnold J. Thurmond High School	651	7.57%
Parker-Gray High School	628	7.30%
Blois Hundley High School	603	7.01%
Petey Jones High School	487	5.66%
King Street High School	326	3.79%
Chinquapin High School	265	3.08%
Total	8602	100.00%

What is your relation to ACPS? (Check all that apply.)

Choices	Percentage	Count
Community member	34.81%	2994
Alumnus	22.97%	1976
Current ACPS student	22.47%	1933
Parent/Guardian of a current ACPS student	19.59%	1685
Employee	10.43%	897
Total Entries		8602

Relation to ACPS



- Community member
- Alumnus
- Current ACPS student
- Parent/Guardian of a current ACPS student
- Employee

Recommendations for renaming T. C. Williams High School

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“It’s better to be informed...” Aaliyah said.
“Being a bit uncomfortable may not be what people want, but I think it’s necessary in order to move forward as a **community.**” Aaliyah Royster, a sophomore at T.C. Williams on in-class lessons, learning the history behind T.C. Williams and Matthew Maury ([Washington Post, Nov. 2020](#))



Rationale to Replace “T.C. Williams” with “Alexandria” High School

“...Haven't we learned that history has different perspectives, that no person is without fault and you can't please everyone? Naming schools, streets, bridges, parks and stadiums after historical figures is not necessary to preserve history. Let's preserve the *history of the place* by naming the only high school in our city

"Alexandria High School". Let's give recognition to the city where we live, work and grow. Root the identity of the school in the area it represents..." ~ACPS student Z. S.

“...because we have people from so many different places naming the school after a person would be bad. Some people will like the person and others won't and that would be divisive. That's why we think it would be best to simply call it **Alexandria High School.**”~ACPS student O. D.

Systemic Alignment: On January 23, the Alexandria City Council unanimously adopted a resolution to acknowledge racial inequity in the past and present, and commit to adopting practices and policies that promote racial and social equity. The resolution advances “ALL Alexandria,” the City of Alexandria’s commitment to pursue equitable outcomes for everyone in the community.

Student Accessibility & Support: Alexandria embraces a diverse population which mirrors that of the only public high school in The City. The City is a partner in providing access for all—from early childhood education through adult education.

Strategic Resource Allocation: ACPS and Alexandria City are committed partners in providing resources to provide all Alexandria families with a strong and equitable educational experience. Alexandria City works in partnership with ACPS through operating budgets and joint task forces for improvement.



Rationale to Replace “T.C. Williams” with “Titan Community” High School (TC)

“In Alexandria, we have one public High School with a diverse, unique and rich history. The person that T.C. Williams High School was named for has an unfortunate history. While we wish to disassociate from this person, we need to consider continuing our rich traditions. Long have we chanted ‘Let’s Go TC’ at our games. We, students boast, ‘I go to TC.’ Graduates are proud to say they went to TC. TC, these two letters, are a part of our school’s identity. It goes deeper and beyond a person. These letters signify a community. I propose **Titan Community High School.**”~ACPS student C. M.

Systemic Alignment: Students across the ACPS school network know one day they will be a Titan when they enter high school. Continuing that tradition and building on the word “Community” creates a strong sense of place and belonging for the diverse student population to come together as one. Their learning is bridges across all schools and subjects, which sets them up for success in high school and beyond.

Student Accessibility & Support: With a long history of students cheering on the teams and referring to their alma mater as “TC Titans” is what is most known.

Family and Community Engagement: With only one high school in Alexandria, the students, alumni, and community supports “We are the Titans” and “Remember the Titans.” It is how the community comes together and supports each other.



Rationale to Replace “T.C. Williams” with “Ruth Bader Ginsburg” High School

Systemic Alignment

“Ruth Bader Ginsburg, former supreme court justice, is the perfect person for uniting our community and embodying modern ACPS values with her name on the front of our school. R.B.G. was, and still is, an important role model to the younger community.” ~ACPS student

Instructional Excellence:

“ ‘A prime part of the history of our Constitution ... is the story of the extension of constitutional rights and protections to people once ignored or excluded,’ Ginsburg wrote for the court in *United States v. Virginia*, the 1996 case that struck down the state’s exclusion of women from the Virginia Military Institute, perhaps her most important opinion in an education case and a sentiment that also reflected her votes in cases involving students of color, LGBTQ Americans, and students in special education.” [What Ruth Bader Ginsburg Meant to Education, Edweek.org](https://www.edweek.org/education/what-ruth-bader-ginsburg-meant-to-education/2020/09/24)

Student Accessibility & Support: “She is the definition of inclusion, diversity, and activism. She once said “the stain of generations of racial oppression is still visible in our society, and the determination to hasten its removal remains vital,” deciding to change the names of T.C. and Maury, ending the legacy of racism and confederacy in ACPS is exactly the type of action Ginsberg worked in support of. R.B.G also frequently spoke out about the importance of women in power, saying “women belong in all places where decisions are being made...it shouldn’t be that women are the exception.” It would send a message of equality and inclusion to rename T.C. after a strong woman so outspoken about racial and gender equality, and one who has done so much to inspire the younger generation.” ~ACPS student

Ruth Bader Ginsburg 1933-2020

Recommendations for renaming Matthew Maury Elementary School

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“Sometimes our history is good, sometimes it’s not so good, but it’s just the world we live in,” Kaelyn said. But “if you don’t know history, you don’t know if something ever happened before.”

Kaelyn Stewart, Matthew Maury 3rd grade student on in-class lessons learning the history behind T.C. Williams and Matthew Maury ([Washington Post, Nov. 2020](#))

Data From Semi-Finalist Poll

Matthew Maury Elementary School



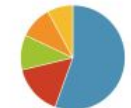
Poll interest from the community resulted in 6,345 entries to rename Matthew Maury Elementary School.

Choices	Count	Percentage
Naomi Brooks Elementary School	1933	30.46%
Rosemont Park Elementary School	1315	20.72%
Jean Reid Elementary School	594	9.36%
Katherine Johnson Elementary School	528	8.32%
John Lewis Elementary School	471	7.42%
Harriet Tubman Elementary School	455	7.17%
Ruch Bader Ginsburg Elementary School	372	5.86%
Russell Road Elementary School	354	5.58%
Sarah Kemp Brady Elementary School	323	5.09%
Total	6345	99.98%

What is your relation to ACPS? (Check all that apply.)

Choices	Percentage	Count
Community member	60.16%	3817
Parent/Guardian of a current ACPS student	17.04%	1081
Current ACPS student	11.65%	739
Alumnus	10.89%	691
Employee	8.59%	545
		Total Entries 6345
		Unanswered 2

Relationship to ACPS



- Community member
- Parent/Guardian of a current ACPS student
- Current ACPS student
- Alumnus
- Employee



Rationale to Replace “Matthew Maury” with “Naomi Brooks” Elementary School



I nominate Naomi Brooks because she exemplifies the courage, humility and strength it takes to be an educator. Teachers are the real Heroes.
~ACPS student A.C.

Systemic Alignment: Brooks understands alignment from a teaching perspective and fighting for equitable resources and opportunities for all.

Instructional Excellence and Student Accessibility & Support: Brooks was raised attending segregated schools in Alexandria. Her strong desire to learn and share that with children was strong. She earned a degree in elementary education from Virginia State College and began her teaching career in 1955 in Alexandria—committed to educating all students. She was a beloved teacher at Charles Houston Elementary School and Cora Kelly Elementary School.

Family and Community Engagement: Born and raised in Alexandria, Brooks’ rich family history and her own life are woven into the fabric of the Alexandria community. Brooks graduated second in her class when she graduated from the all black Parker-Gray High School (PGHS). She attended the Seminary School for Colored Children, Lyles Crouch and PGHS. Brooks’ roots go far back in Alexandria’s rich history as a member of the Quander and Lewis families. She was the first person in these families to attend college.

Naomi Lewis Brooks (1934-2020)



Rationale to Replace “Matthew Maury” with “Rosemont Park” Elementary School



Student Comment

“I think our school should be named after our neighborhood identity. Rosemont is a place of historic roots. We have a diverse community where people care and come together to support each other.”

Systemic Alignment

Building a community around a school has been a key factor since the school’s opening in 1929– with six classrooms and an auditorium – to serve the growing population of Rosemont and what was then referred to as the “West End” of Alexandria.

Instructional Excellence and Family and Community Engagement: The school has a long history of being a central connecting spot for families in the neighborhood.

Rosemont’s most “famous son” may be television personality (and original Ronald McDonald) Willard Scott, who grew up at 125 Commonwealth Avenue in the 1940s. Actor Dermot Mulroney, astronaut Guy Spence Gardner, comedian Casey Wilson, actor Chip Esten, Virginia congressman Howard Smith, and Ohio congressman John Hunter also lived in Rosemont.

The Rosemont Neighborhood is on the Historic Registrar. The neighborhood history dates back to 1908.



Rationale to Replace “Matthew Maury” with “Jean Reid” Elementary School



Community Member Comment

Reid was once described as *“a tornado”* with *“the force to knock out the old and useless while creating a new path for the new and purposeful.”*

Instructional Excellence: Reid spent her entire career as a teacher and reading specialist in ACPS: 1968-2001 (Lee, Charles Barrett, Stonewall Jackson, Patrick Henry, Mount Vernon and Cora Kelly Elementary Schools). Reid was honored as an Alexandria and *Washington Post* Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher.

Student Accessibility & Support: Reid was extraordinarily successful with children having difficulties reading.

Family and Community Engagement: Reid was generous with her time helping and supporting students and other teachers.

Jean Reid (died 2005)

ACPS Superintendent of Schools Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. respectfully recommends the following two names to the ACPS Board on March 4, 2021.

- » **T.C. Williams High School to be renamed Alexandria High School**
- » **Matthew Maury Elementary School to be renamed Naomi Brooks Elementary School**

