

The Identity Project

Working Plan for

Communications and Engagement

This plan is based on the following proposed School Board Dates:

Oct. 29, 2020: Public Hearing

Nov. 16, 2020: Supt's Recommendation to the School Board

Nov. 23, 2020: School Board vote on renaming

Goal

To assess whether a name change has support across the entire student body at T.C. Williams High School, the Matthew Maury Elementary School community, and among all key demographic groups in the wider Alexandria community.

Research

Background

T.C. Williams High School is named after Thomas Chambliss Williams, who served as superintendent of schools from the 1930s to 1963 and was a noted segregationist.

The conversation around renaming Alexandria's only public high school has been ongoing since the early 1990s and was raised again in 2017, when the idea was raised at the same time protesters called for the removal of a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville, Virginia. T.C. Williams alumni and members of the community have reignited the conversation in light of the current cultural movement.

Jan. 10 1962 Board meeting: Consideration of names for the new high school. The PTAs were asked to put forward names. Board members suggested Charles T. Scott, the first GWHS graduate to die in WWII and Hallowell after the first school in Alexandria.

https://mail.acps.k12.va.us/service/home/~/?auth=co&loc=en_US&id=387857&part=2

Feb. 14 1963 Board meeting: A list of new names for the high school was compiled for the Board.

https://mail.acps.k12.va.us/service/home/~/?auth=co&loc=en_US&id=387857&part=3

Notes from Meetings with Student School Board Representatives:

Ms. Lorraine Johnson

- Conduct sessions during the 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. lunch schedule.
- Schedule time to talk to students during English class. We usually do this when there are visitors or surveys.
- Schedule mandatory assemblies for the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior class. Led by Lorraine Johnson and Ashley Sanchez-Viafara.
- Leadership by student school board reps is essential. It will ensure a safe space for students.
- Have a mandatory 20- or 30-minute classroom discussion and have every teacher record that virtual class discussion to view. This will allow more information to be shared by students.
- Make use of the asynchronous learning day that occurs on Monday. First period teachers could afford students the opportunity to share answers to questions regarding the renaming process.

Ms. Ashley Sanchez-Viafara

- Classroom discussions are essential. Bias and microaggressions are present in the classroom.
- Create a platform for students by students.
- A place where students' voices are heard. A safe space where they will feel comfortable sharing.
- It would be something that would be shared only among students.
- Create a presence on social media that will really engage students.
- Student created videos. It will include other student leaders.
- Have the discussions during the one hour break, after first period.
- Host student-led discussions after school.
- Create a Canvas page, specifically focused on the renaming process and the background and history.
- Focus on specific student groups.
- Sections opened to T.C. athletes. They carry the brand.

Matthew Maury

On Aug. 6, 2020 - following the School Board's decision to move ahead to consider changing the name of T.C. Williams High School - the School Board received a second petition requesting they consider changing the name of [Matthew Maury Elementary School](#). Matthew Maury, known as the "Father of Modern Oceanography and Naval Meteorology" for his contributions to charting winds and ocean currents, including ocean lanes for passing ships at sea, was also a member of the Confederate army. He helped acquire a ship for the [Confederacy](#) while advocating to end the war in America. This issue had been first raised by the community three years previously. Following the petition of more than 100 signatures, the School Board voted on [Sept. 17, 2020](#) to begin the public engagement process to consider renaming Matthew Maury Elementary School.

Fairfax's Engagement Process

[FCPS Policy](#)

[FCPS Reg](#)

[Process used for Jeb Stuart](#) in 2017-18

Process used for [Robert E. Lee](#) in 2020

- Fairfax's process for Jeb Stuart took 18 months. The final name selection, however, required the community to poll on one single day in person at the school.
- The process for Robert E. Lee took six months to complete.

Arlington's Engagement Process

Process used for Washington Lee [here](#).

- Arlington used a committee, which included the principal, who remained neutral throughout and supported the student body's selection.

Ferdinand T. Day (FTD) Committee Experience

- FTD tasked a committee selected by the Board to select a name. Some members had strong preferences from the beginning or represented a group campaigning for a specific name. The committee recommended four names to the Board. The Board ultimately endorsed a component of one of the committee's hybrid recommendations, selecting the only name of an Alexandrian from among the committee's recommendations. Because the Board did not endorse one of the recommended names in its entirety, some committee members were dissatisfied with the process and the outcome.

[ACPS Policy FF](#)

[ACPS Reg FF-R](#)

Engagement to Date

- Board members and the superintendent have publicly stated that this is the right time to consider changing the name of T.C. Williams and Matthew Maury. They have approved a process that results in a final report to the Board no later than spring 2021.
- Petitioners have complained that the process is too slow.
- Student voices to date appear to have minimal diverse representation.
- Many students do not know the history of T.C. Williams or Matthew Maury- the individuals or the schools.

Analysis

Instead of two separate processes, it was decided to enlarge the education and engagement around the consideration of a name change for T.C. Williams, include Matthew Maury, and have both conversations at the same time. This would streamline and align the process while also recognizing that each would need their own separate considerations and forums.

The process needs to:

- Be student-led with the support of ACPS staff
- Ensure the voices of all students, not just a few, are heard and represented
- Educate students in age-appropriate ways on the history of the City of Alexandria, T.C. Williams and Matthew Maury, the individuals, and both school histories
- Incorporate the voices of key stakeholders in the community who believe ACPS has not listened to them fully in the past
- Involve the '71 Titans, other alumni and groups who rely on the support of the alumni, such as the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria
- Be sensitive to the timing of the process and more pertinent needs of students during a pandemic
- Tied in with the [2025 Strategic Plan: Equity for All](#) communication and engagement work
- Align with ACPS' internal racial equity work and [2020-21 Areas of Focus](#)

Audience

Students of Color from all communities across the high school and elementary school

- International Academy students
- Black Student Union
- T.C. Student Body
- Ethiopian and students of Middle Eastern origin
- Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN)
- Hispanic student community
- Matthew Maury Elementary School students

Alumni

- 1971 Titans
- Coaches Boone and Yoast families
- Alumni who still live in Alexandria
- Scholarship Fund of Alexandria alumni

Key stakeholder communities within Alexandria

- Secret Seven
- Ferdinand T. Day family
- Woods Avenue neighbors
- NAACP
- Departmental Progressive Club
- Tenants & Workers
- Parker-Gray Alumni
- PTAs
- African-American History Museum of Alexandria

Objectives

Objective One:

By November 23, 2020, all current students at T.C. Williams High School will be aware of and understand the history of Alexandria, Thomas Chambliss Williams the person and the high school.

Evaluation: Survey to check student awareness

Objective Two:

By November 23, 2020, all student voices will have been solicited and their views documented to assess where the current student body stands on the name changes.

Evaluation: Survey to assess student stance

Objective Three:

By November 23, 2020, all current students at Matthew Maury Elementary School will be aware that ACPS is discussing changing the name of the school.

Evaluation: Survey to check student awareness

Objective Four:

By November 23, 2020, all key groups of alumni and community stakeholders will have opportunities to engage in the process and have the opportunity to formally document their views on the name changes.

Evaluation: Summary of outreach work and the views of each group to be documented in a report received during comment period.

Strategies

Strategy 1: Student Education Strategy

Student education sessions

Train the trainer model where students learn about the history and share with others

Parent education to support/allow for discussion at home

TACTICS FOR THIS STRATEGY

- Kiosks/boards outside T.C. Williams

- Videos and stories of our history (repackaged and new) shared on Canvas and in Titan Time
- Titan Time education and discussion sessions
- Social Studies lessons for classroom time
- Leaders in our history sessions where the student council then shares the history lesson on social media with other students
- Creation of lessons explaining what is happening and why suited to Matthew Maury students

Ms. Lorraine Johnson

- Conduct sessions during the 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. lunch schedule.
- Schedule time to talk to students during English class. We usually do this when there are visitors or surveys.
- Schedule mandatory assemblies for the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior class. Led by Lorraine Johnson and Ashley Sanchez-Viafara.
- Leadership by student school board reps is essential. It will ensure a safe space for students.
- Have a mandatory 20- or 30-minute classroom discussion and have every teacher record that virtual class discussion to view. This will allow more information to be shared by students.
- Make use of the asynchronous learning day that occurs on Monday. First period teachers could afford students the opportunity to share answers to questions regarding the renaming process.

Ms. Ashley Sanchez-Viafara

- Classroom discussions are essential. Bias and microaggressions are present in the classroom.
- Create a platform for students by students.
- A place where students' voices are heard. A safe space where they will feel comfortable sharing.
- It would be something that would be shared only among students.
- Create a presence on social media that will really engage students.
- Student created videos. It will include other student leaders.
- Have the discussions during the one-hour break, after first period.
- Host student-led discussions after school.
- Create a Canvas page, specifically focused on the renaming process and the background and history.
- Focus on specific student groups.
- Sections opened to T.C. athletes. They carry the brand.

Next steps:

- Student Education Team meeting on 9/15: Mr. Shabazz, Ms. Kropp, Mr. Vinson, Pete, Kennetra, Sarah
- Tentative schedule for lessons through week of Oct. 26, 2020

Strategy 2: Student-Led Engagement strategy

Student-led engagement sessions

Train the trainer model where students train others to lead engagement sessions

In-class discussions

Parent education to support/allow for discussion at home

TACTICS FOR THIS STRATEGY

- Student-led conversations for specific groups
- Survey to assess where students stand designed with input from student leadership
- Student Support Team offers ways to start/facilitate a discussion at home
- Student Council planning sessions
- Community circles
- Lunchtime chats
- Student-designed and led assemblies/sessions with community voices
- Parent engagement to stimulate student involvement
- International Academy discussion sessions in Titan Time
- Family forum for Matthew Maury families so that students who want to be involved in the discussions at a deeper level can have this opportunity

Strategy 3: Endorsement Strategy

To include:

1971 team members

Boone and Yoast families

Woods Avenue neighbors

Black community across Alexandria (Parker-Gray Alumni, Secret Seven/Black History Museum reps/FTD family/ NAACP/Departmental Progressive Club)

TACTICS FOR THIS STRATEGY

- Document the stories from these key stakeholders, groups to share out as part of the education strategy
- Document their stance on the name change on video/audio
- Involve this group in student-led assemblies/webinars/townhalls to discuss the name change

Strategy 4: Community Engagement Strategy

Public education campaign on Alexandria City's history to include an examination of the lives of Thomas Chambliss Williams and Matthew Maury

Public Feedback Process on webpage

Engage the community in discussions around the history and possible name change

Maintain open channels of communication about the process with the City Council and City's Race and Social Equity Officer

Offer opportunities for the community to share their views in a way that can be documented

TACTICS FOR THIS STRATEGY

- Public Feedback Process
- Sharing of ACPS history via videos, the VOICES series and interviews
- Sharing of student voices and views
- Community town halls led by students with support of ACPS/T.C. staff
- Webinars with key stakeholders speaking about their experiences
- Webinars with the City's Race and Social Equity Officer and ACPS equity staff
- Conversations/Webinars/Community chats with key stakeholders
- Presentations at City Hall
- Alignment and overlay with *2025 Strategic Plan: Equity for All* community chats
- Communication of ACPS' internal equity work to the community via ACPS Express/Insider
- Community Book Read with Alexandria Libraries on the book, *Building the Federal Schoolhouse*
- Family forum for Matthew Maury families so that students who want to be involved in the discussions at a deeper level can have this opportunity
- FACE team outreach to families who do not speak English as a first language

Strategy 6: Media Outreach Strategy

Regular information updates regarding the process and engagement opportunities

Platform for community education campaign

TACTICS FOR THIS STRATEGY

- Stories from ACPS history
- Features on ACPS' internal equity work
- Op-Eds (supt. and staff)
- Regular updates on opportunities for community engagement
- Public Feedback Process

Timeline and Deliverables

Work Groups

School Board Support: Julia Burgos

Potential budget implications: Peter Balas, Julia Burgos

Public Comment Process: Office of Accountability & Research, Julia Burgos

Student Engagement: Peter Balas, Greg Baldwin, Kennetra Wood, Dr. Marcia Jackson and Julia Burgos

Student Education Component: Sarah Whelan, Kennetra Wood, Peter Balas

Families and Community Engagement: Taneika Tukan, John Porter, Krishna Leyva

Content/Material Creation: Helen Lloyd, Communications Team, School Board Student Reps

Key Implementation Tasks

- 3 Read-ins
- 1 Family Forum for Matthew Maury families
- 3 Community Discussions
- 3 Student Forums
- 4 weeks of in-class educational discussions for HS, MS and ES students

Time	Action	Target Audience	Who / Status
Week of August 10, 2020			
	Identify leaders for each area		Julia Helen Kurt

	Finalize dates of all engagement sessions		Helen Taneika
	Connect with Social Studies Instructional Specialist re. lesson planning for Middle School and High School student education sessions		Helen
	Detail outline of content needed and timeline for community education materials		Susan Julie
Week of August 24, 2020			
Aug. 25	Presentation for Board Work Session finalized and posted		Julia
Aug. 25	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider to include details about Board Work Session on Aug. 27		Julie
Aug. 26	Update website with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Session presentation and materials • Engagement dates • Outline of the engagement process/overview 		Aaron
Aug. 26	Outreach to media re: Board Work session		Julie
Aug. 27	Board Work Session		Julia
Aug. 27 (following Board meeting)	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider Special Edition News release		Helen Delaina
Week of August 31, 2020			

Aug. 31	Social media scheduled		Delaina
Sept. 2	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of upcoming engagement opportunities • Overview of the history of ACPS and where to find it • Our stance on Equity • History of the name change process for new parents 		Julie
Sept. 3.	Outreach to media re: Parker Gray 100th anniversary		Julie Susan
Sept. 3	Work team meeting kick-off and assignments		Julia
Week of September 7, 2020			
	100th anniversary of Parker Gray celebration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • Video • Program from class reunion posted to website • Web page 		
Sept. 9	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of upcoming engagement opportunities • 100th anniversary of Parker Gray celebration 		Julie Susan Marcia Darrell
Sept. 10	Social Media sharing content from Express		Delaina
Sept. 10/11	Meet with student leaders to plan outline of student engagement process		Peter Marcia Greg B.
	Establish portal where students can drop video content sharing their opinions		Susan IT

Week of September 14, 2020			
Sept. 14	Meet with student reps to plan their engagement process		Pete Marcia Greg B.
Sept. 16	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of upcoming engagement opportunities • Video/VOICES clip/historic interview 		Julie Susan
Sept. 16 4-5 p.m.	Community Read-in planning meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History lessons • Links to systemic racism 		Kennetra Doug Reed
Sept. 17	Social Media sharing content from Express		Delaina
Week of September 21, 2020			
Sept. 21	Outreach to media re: Community Read-ins		Julie
Sept. 23	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of upcoming engagement opportunities • Community Read-in #1 clips and video 		Julie Nathan
Sept. 24 6-7 p.m.	Community Read-in #1: Doug Reed on T.C. Williams the Superintendent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History lessons • Links to systemic racism 	Nathan recording through Swaggit	Doug Reed, Kennetra
Week of September 28, 2020			

Sept. 30	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of upcoming engagement opportunities • Video/VOICES clip/historic interview 		Susan Julie
Oct. 1 7pm-8pm	Community Read-in #2: Doug Reed on Alexandria's Role in Segregation and Massive Resistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History lessons • Links to systemic racism 		Kennetra Doug
Sept. 28 - Oct. 1	Middle School Education Session prep with in-school staff Elementary School Education Session prep with in-school staff		Sarah Whelan
Week of October 5, 2020			
	Education session #1 Titan Time Education sessions Elementary sessions at Maury		Sarah Whelan
Oct. 7	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of upcoming engagement opportunities • Community Read-in #2 clips and video 		Julie Nathan
	Student Conversation #1 (with equity staff from ACPS and the City)		Greg Baldwin & School Board reps
Oct. 8 6 p.m. - 7 p.m.	Community Read-in #3: Doug Reed on The Real Story Behind: Remember the Titans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History lessons • Links to systemic racism 		Doug Reed Kennetra Wood

Week of October 12, 2020

	Education session #2 Titan Time Education sessions Elementary sessions at Maury		Sarah Whelan
	Preparation for start of Online Public Feedback Process Student survey to gauge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding about the history of T.C. ● Stance on the name change Community survey to gauge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding about the history of T.C. ● Stance on the name change 		Accountability team Julia
	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Launch of Online Public Feedback Process - link added to Express/Insider ● Summary of upcoming engagement opportunities ● Video/VOICES clip/historic interview ● Reminder of student engagement process starting at T.C. Middle schools the following week 		Julie Susan
	Student Conversation #2 (with equity staff from ACPS and the City)		Greg Baldwin and SB student reps
Oct. 14 6-7 pm	Community Conversation #1 (Moderated by a Board Member plus Key Community Stakeholder)		John Porter & Taneika Tukan

Week of October 19, 2020

	Education session #3 Titan Time Education sessions Elementary sessions at Maury		

Oct. 21	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of upcoming engagement opportunities • Community Read-in #3 clips and video 		Julie Nathan
	Student Conversation #3 (with equity staff from ACPS and the City)		Greg Baldwin & SB student reps
Oct. 21-6-7 pm	Community Conversation #2: Secret Seven (Moderated by a Board Member plus Key Community Stakeholder)		Ericka Miller Gwen Day Fuller
Week of October 26, 2020			
Oct. 26	Online Public Feedback Process concludes		Julia Clint
	Education session #4 Titan Time Education sessions Elementary sessions at Maury		
Oct. 28	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminder of Oct. 29 Public Hearing • Video/VOICES clip/historic interview • Links to recordings of Community Conversations 		Julie Susan Nathan
Oct. 28 6-7pm	Community Conversation #3		John Porter & Taneika Tukan
TBD	Maury Family Forum		John Porter & Taneika Tukan
Oct. 29	Board Public Hearing		Jennifer Abbruzese
Week of November 2, 2020			

Nov. 4	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of public hearing 		Julie Susan Nathan
Nov 5.	Summary of survey data shared with SLT Analyze data from the survey to gauge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding about the history of T.C. • Stance on the name change 		Clint Page and Julia Burgos
Week of November 9, 2020			
Nov 11	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of next steps in the process 		Julie Susan Nathan
Nov. 13	Share initial survey data with the Board in Board Brief		Julia and Clint
Week of November 16, 2020			
Nov. 17	Write report and presentation and post to ESB		Clint Julia Delaina
Nov. 18	ACPS Express and ACPS Insider with link to ESB		Julie Susan Nathan Delaina
Week of November 23, 2020 (Week of Thanksgiving)			
Nov. 23	Board Vote		
Nov. 23	Special Edition ACPS Insider, ACPS Express and news release with the result of the vote		Helen, Julie

Week of November 30, 2020			
Dec. 1	Announce next steps in the process and timeline for any decisions needed around new names, if necessary		
Week of December 7, 2020			
Dec. 7	Presentation of timeline, findings and Alexandria's history in the lobby at City Hall (video/slideshow/images/audio)		Susan Nathan