

ACPS Board Brief

Date: February 5, 2021

BOARD INFORMATION: X

MEETING PREPARATION:

FROM: Julia Burgos, Chief of School & Community Relations

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

TO: The Honorable Meagan Alderton, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Phase II Identity Project Update: Community Poll Number One

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.

SUMMARY: Poll number one was conducted and data was shared with the School Board clerk and the superintendent to identify nine semi-finalist names for each school.

BACKGROUND:

On Nov. 23, 2020, the Alexandria City School Board voted to change the names of T.C. Williams High School and Matthew Maury Elementary School, citing the fact that neither name was aligned with ACPS' values of equity and diversity.

[ACPS Policy FF](#) states that the naming of schools or facilities can

1. honor individuals that have made an exceptional contribution to a particular school, school program or the school division as a whole; or
2. recognize places or events of historical significance for their contribution to the community or their impact or related to the school facility itself
3. cannot be named after a current ACPS employee
4. should not cause confusion with other public facilities in Alexandria, adjoining jurisdictions or other areas of the Commonwealth

[ACPS Reg FF-R](#) outlines the process:

1. ACPS staff will present a timeline to the Board that allows for sufficient public engagement and outreach.
2. The decision-making process should not involve committees.
3. The Board Clerk will help compile the name requests as they come in.
4. The Board has the final decision.

This will be the first time that ACPS has been required to rename a facility/school. Renaming in ACPS schools has previously focused on:

1. Naming a new school/facility
2. Naming a wing of a building in honor of a donor

Following a robust community engagement and consultation process, ACPS moved into phase two of The Identity Project as it considered new names for both T.C. Williams High School and Matthew Maury Elementary School. The second phase of The Identity Project — the selection of new names — ensures that students, staff, alumni, families and the community are all heard.

Most importantly, we want to keep the next generation and our students' voices at the heart of this process.

SUMMARY: Following the superintendent’s recommendation to the School Board and its vote on Nov. 23, 2020, to rename both T. C. Williams High School and Matthew Maury Elementary School, the division moved forward with the Phase II implementation and timelines.

Community Poll Number One and Selecting the Semi-Finalist Names

To assist the community with suggested names for both schools, we invited all ACPS students to participate in an essay/poster campaign to submit names for community consideration. Following the student submission process, the community was invited to participate in a public submission process to choose one of the student selections or to submit a new name nomination.

- **Student entries** collected from Dec. 9, 2020 through Jan. 8, 2020, were added to electronic flip books on the ACPS website.
- **Community Poll Number One** was open from Jan. 13 through Jan. 27, 2021. These polls generated the following outcomes. The final poll data and complete list of names/votes was delivered to the Board clerk on Jan. 29, 2021, for review.

T. C. Williams Poll #1 (poll ran Jan. 13-27, 2021)			
Entry Totals (number of individual votes)	# of Entries suitable for consideration	# of entries considered inappropriate (such as for language, concepts or people with racist, criminal, or extremist backgrounds; inappropriate comments; connections to slavery or the confederacy, and other misc. suggestions)	# of Different Names Suggested and posted
51,121	13,466	37,655	98 Total Names Added to the Poll, including 51 student entries from the poster/essay campaign. There were a few names that did not make it on the poll (due to late entries or missed entries) but are still considered legitimate naming opportunities and were categorized with the appropriate names list.

Matthew Maury Poll #1 (poll ran Jan. 13-27, 2021)

Entry Totals (number of individual votes)	# of Entries suitable for consideration	# of entries considered inappropriate (such as language, concepts or people with racist, criminal, or extremist backgrounds; inappropriate comments; connections to slavery or the confederacy; and other misc. suggestions)	# of Different Names Suggested and Posted
7,861	3,611	4,250 or 46% of votes/names entered	<p>61 Total Names Added to the Poll, including 29 Student entries from the poster/essay program.</p> <p>There were a few names that did not make it on the poll (due to late entries or missed entries) but are still considered legitimate naming opportunities and were categorized with the appropriate names list.</p>

RECOMMENDATION: The Board clerk vetted all submitted names and prepared a list of the top names for the superintendent’s consideration. The superintendent recommends the list of semi-finalists be distributed to the public through community-wide final polls (Identity Project Poll number two) for each school. Poll number two for each school will be launched on Fri., Feb. 5, 2021, and close on Feb. 19, 2021. The superintendent recommends the following names for final community consideration. The names are in alphabetical order, not by preference. Descriptions of each potential name can be found on the [ACPS website](#).

T. C. Williams Semi-Finalist Names	Matthew Maury Semi-Finalist Names
Alexandria High School	Sarah Kemp Brady Elementary School
Ruth Bader Ginsburg High School	Naomi Brooks Elementary School
Chinquapin High School	Ruth Bader Ginsburg Elementary School
Blois Hundley High School	Katherine Johnson Elementary School
Petey Jones High School	John Lewis Elementary School
King Street High School	Jean Reid Elementary
Parker-Gray High School	Rosemont Park Elementary School
Arnold J. Thurmond High School	Russell Road Elementary School
Titan Community High School	Harriet Tubman Elementary School

Key calendar dates for the remainder of the renaming process:

- **Feb. 19, 2021:** Second community polls close
- **March 4, 2021:** Top three names for each school are 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

IMPACT: Ensuring “Equity for All” by choosing school names that are welcoming, empowering, and equity-focused for all ACPS students, staff and families.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Policy FF: Non-Sponsored Naming and Renaming of Schools or School Division Facilities
2. Regulation FF-R: Regulations for Non-Sponsored Naming and Renaming of Schools or School Division Facilities.

CONTACT:

Julia Burgos

julia.burgos@acps.k12.va.us