

REQUEST FOR NON-SPONSORED NAMING OR RENAMING OF AN EXISTING SCHOOL DIVISION FACILITY

The School Board has the authority to name or rename any new or existing schools, school division buildings or facilities, rooms, fields, grounds, or any portions or areas thereof (collectively, "School Division Facilities"), used by or in connection with the operation of the Alexandria City Public Schools, as defined in Policy FF. Once this form and petition are completed, mail to Alexandria City School Board, c/o Board Clerk, 1340 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314, or email to boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us. You will be contacted as to the status of the application by the Clerk's office.

Name of Person/Group Making Request: Pamela W. Vetrini

Current School Division Facility: Matthew Maury Elementary School

Proposed Name Change: The Parker Gray Rosemont School

Biographical/Historical Data Concerning Name and Rationale for Request: (Attach additional pages if necessary.) _____

Please attach petition pages with the signatures and contact information for at least 100 Alexandria City residents.

Biographical/ Historical Data Concerning Name and Rationale for Request:

Matthew Fontaine Maury was a confederate officer who fought in support of slavery. While his efforts in oceanography were noteworthy, his actions surrounding the Civil War and slavery were indefensible. He attempted to negotiate a slave trade from the United States to Brazil in order to help his fellow southerners who would lose a great deal of money if they lost their ability to sell their slaves. He invented an early version of the torpedo which was used by the confederates to sink Union ships. He tried to create a New Virginia Colony in Mexico after the Civil War where slave labor would continue with a new label of indentured servitude- he convinced nearly 4,000 confederate soldiers to defect before his plan was thwarted by unrest in Mexico.

His name was plucked from the annals of Civil War history by the Daughters of the Confederacy around 1920 when there was a movement to "intellectualize" racism with eugenics. Since he was seen as a less barbaric and more intellectual confederate, a public relations campaign began to name things after him at that time. Matthew Maury Elementary was named by an unelected school board who did not engage with the community to find a name for the school. Naming a school for a confederate was a signal that this was a white school in a white neighborhood. It is past time for the name of Maury to change.

According to ACPs rules, we must have a petition with a hundred signatures for them to begin the process of renaming a school. The process itself is inclusive, and involves research, community engagement, town halls, etc. The school board will ask for other names and options at this time. This petition must have an alternative name in order to be accepted by ACPs. After reviewing compelling and inspiring suggestions like Katherine Johnson, James Henson, Doris Miller, Judge Nolan Dawkins, Blois Hundley, and more; this petition will suggest, "The Parker Gray Rosemont School". While this name is just a placeholder, it represents the significance of engaging both parts of our school community in this decision. As a Maury parent, I am very conscious of the social and academic divide in our school and community. I am hoping that this change, while largely symbolic, can be an effective way to start to bridge the gap and ignite the process to ensure equity for all of our students.