

January 30, 2018

School Naming: Revised Process for Moving Forward

Overview

In the Fall 2017, APS implemented a process to gather information to develop more detailed criteria for the existing APS Naming Policy. The process was to include gathering stakeholder input through staff surveys, online community surveys, student focus groups and community focus groups. This community engagement was facilitated by students from the George Mason University School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (SCAR). The GMU team presented a final report in December which is posted [online](#).

While the focus of the process was to generate feedback on wording for the criteria, most participants focused solely on whether APS should or should not rename Washington-Lee High School. As a result, the recommendations in the GMU SCAR report mostly address the issues around renaming Washington-Lee:

1. This process should not be rushed, with enough time built in for all stakeholders to contribute to the discussion.
2. There should be two separate efforts – that allow enough time and transparency for community engagement – to address the process and criteria to: (a) name future schools, and (b) consider renaming existing schools.
3. There is a strong desire for consensus on the process and criteria for school names, and to bring together representatives from faculty, staff, alumni, students, and community members.
NOTE: Once again, the “process” recommended is mostly a reference to the committee and procedure to be used to make a decision about naming or renaming Washington-Lee. The makeup of a “school naming” committee is already defined in the School Naming PIP.
4. As part of the instructional program and other activities, continue to provide additional opportunities for students to discuss the effects of racism.

Additional Factors

While the recommendations above call for slowing the process down and delaying a decision about Washington-Lee, APS will need to begin naming processes for a number of schools:

- The new middle school at the Stratford site
- The neighborhood school to be developed at the Drew Model School site
- The new Montessori school to be developed at the Henry school site
- The name for the building being built on Wilson Boulevard that will house the H-B and Stratford programs

In addition, other facilities in the planning stages that will need naming decisions include:

- The new elementary school at the Reed site
- The school or program at the Education Center site

Revised Approach

Phase I: October–December 2017 – GMU Engagement – **COMPLETE**

Phase II: February/March 2018 – Staff committee will proceed with developing Draft Naming Criteria to be used to name future schools (new schools/projects listed above)

Phase III: April/May 2018 – School Board to approve Draft Criteria/Revised School Naming Policy

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Phase IV – New School Names:

- June-August – In accordance with the School Naming PIP, recruit committee membership for 4 School Naming Committees for School Board approval (Stratford, Montessori, Drew and Wilson facilities)
- Fall 2018 – 4 School Naming Committees convened to develop school name recommendations
- December 2018 – Approval of 4 New School Names

Phase IV – WL School Name:

Separate Process for Washington-Lee Renaming Decision

- June-August 2018 – Develop & Recruit Ad Hoc Committee to Lead Community Conversation
 - Finalize Charge, to include engagement and community conversations
 - Identify outside Facilitator for process who understands cultural sensitivity of the topic
 - Co-Chairs? Keep and Change?
 - Membership:
 - W-L students, staff, PTA, alumni
 - Historical Society
 - Civic Associations or Civic Federation
 - NAACP, Hispanic Community, etc.
 - County, CCPTA, Other?
- September–November 2018 –Ad Hoc Committee - Community Conversations
- December 2018/January 2019 – School Board Decision
- January – May 2019:
 - If decision to keep name – no further action needed
 - If SB decides to change WL name – Renaming Process Undertaken
 - June 2019 – School Board approves new name
 - New Name would start – Sept. 2020
- Other Considerations
 - Can APS include a question about this on the Community Satisfaction Survey?
 - Other opportunities to solicit input?