

Washington-Lee Renaming Committee
October 30, 2018 – Syphax Education Center – 7-9 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Committee Attendees:

STUDENTS: John Holt, Chloe Slater, Thornton Thomas

PARENTS: Patrice Kelly, Allison Chen, Duane Butcher

STAFF: Hiromi Isobe, Jackie Stallworth, Dave Peters, Gregg Robertson

ALUMNI: William Moser, Julia Crull, Peter Strack, Dana Raphael

COMMUNITY: James Rosen, Allan Gajadhar, Nikki Roy, George Keating, Melissa Perry

Unable to Attend:

Student: Ana Regina Santos-Caballero and Historical Society: George Axiotis

Facilitator: Sian Madden

APS Staff: Linda Erdos

Welcome, Introductions & Opening

- Linda Erdos welcomed everyone and explained for non-member observers that there is no citizen comment, but a suggestion box and forms are available, and all suggestions are shared with all members.
- Sian Madden invited Melissa Perry to introduce herself and then the committee went around the circle for quick intros.
- Sian led the members in a “lightening round” – asking committee members to share where they were now on reflection of the conversations from the first two meetings. The majority of the members indicated that they are ready to begin to move forward to begin sorting the names to help them select a new name for Washington-Lee.

Recap of Meeting #2

- Sian reminded everyone about the guidelines for the committee’s conversations to build a respectful and creative dialogue
- She also once again reviewed her role as facilitator for the committee meetings and Linda’s role as staff liaison, and reiterated the committee’s role, committee member’s individual roles and the committee’s task.
- Review of Handouts:
 - Combined list of Suggested Names from community (prior to 10/11) and Committee suggestions from first meeting
 - Summary on 240 comments (excluding duplicates) from the “Engage with APS” online form

- Bill Moser reported that he had not had a chance to connect with his specific group of alumni and was unsure if he should proceed. Sian asked the group to consider and respond to that in their table discussions.
- Sian did a final check to confirm that all members understand the assigned task of the committee.

Small Group Discussions followed by Reports/Comments

- Committee members returned to their smaller groups and spent approximately 45 minutes reviewing the lists of suggested names and focusing their discussions on two questions:
 - What are their observations about the lists of suggestions?
 - What more is needed by the members to complete their task
- **Table 1** reported:
 - Regarding trends:
 - There is consistency in a desire to keep the “W-L” identity brand
 - They can hear frustration and passion in many emails
 - Some are seeking more inclusivity
 - Trends show desire to only update the name vs. selecting a radically new name
 - A barrier is the fear that the name change will erase the school’s history
 - Regarding what more is needed:
 - How many more suggestions do we need?
 - At some point we need to make a decision
 - Is it realistic to reach 100% of all constituents/alumni
- **Table 2** reported:
 - Trends - not enough women’s names
 - What more is needed:
 - What should be the cut-off date for input?
 - We need to stop at some point – can we realistically reach everyone?
 - Who gets the email blasts from alumni?
 - What do we need to do to get feedback from the “disenfranchised?”
 - The Renaming Committee needs space to work without the repeated interruptions and hostility from the non-member attendees (W-L alumni association representatives)
- **Table 3** reported:
 - Need better ways to reach some constituents
 - May need more time to process
 - Explore ways to preserve the “W-L” brand
 - A large majority of comments on “Engage with APS” don’t want the name to change
 - Should the committee ask the School Board to reconsider? Impact of election?
 - Not enough feedback from students or young alumni

- **Table 4** reported:
 - Trends
 - Keep “W-L” but choose a different name for the “L”
 - Keep “Washington”
 - Preference for names after individuals
 - What more is needed:
 - Feedback from young alumni – they are difficult to reach and most are not members of the alumni association
 - Need to find ways to get more responses from students
 - More responses from Hispanic community
 - What’s the projected cost?
 - Expanded rationale
- Other comments and suggestions from the whole group discussion included:
 - Don’t ask for input – only ask for suggested names
 - Can we fix the form?
 - Should the committee do anything about the “no change” suggestions?
 - Committee would like to receive more regular updates from the “Engage with APS” feedback over the next two weeks.
 - Several committee members asked for police support or other steps to be taken to eliminate the interruptions from the audience

Next Steps

The committee discussed what they need to do to be prepared for discussion at the next meeting. Next steps will include:

- Gregg Robertson will work with the 4 student committee members to craft an announcement to be made to the WL students during school later this week. In addition, a link will be shared with them so they can access the feedback form.
- Gregg will also assist with inviting the WL Hispanic community (parents and students) to participate in the feedback.
- Committee members will take time before the next meeting to review all of the names suggested thus far and select 3 that they can share with the committee with the reasons and values behind their choices. NOTE: This is not a vote, and does not commit any of the members to a selection; it is just a step to help the committee narrow the field of options.

Schedule of Renaming Committee Meetings (All at 7-9 p.m.):

- Wednesday – Nov. 14 – Syphax Ed. Ctr., 2nd Floor (Rooms 256/258)
- Thursday – Nov. 29 – Syphax Ed. Ctr., 3rd Floor (Rooms 354/356)
- Wednesday – Dec. 05 – Syphax Ed. Ctr., 3rd Floor (Rooms 354/356)
- *Wednesday – Dec. 12 – Syphax Ed. Ctr., 3rd Floor (Rooms 354/356)*
(If Needed)