



RENAMING OF CLASSICAL JUNIOR ACADEMY

(Formerly Kennard Classical Junior Academy)

Tracy Fantini Spies, Chairperson
CJA Renaming Committee
June 14, 2022



AGENDA



- History and Background
- CJA Timeline
- Policy
- Classical Junior Academy Renaming Committee
- Committee Process
- Community Input
- Classical Junior Academy Renaming Committee Results
- CJA Final Results
- Appendix
- Questions



HISTORY and BACKGROUND



- In 2014, parents raised concerns regarding the name of Kennard Classical Junior Academy and its origins.
 - Kennard (1842-1916) was a Confederate lieutenant who supported the establishment and preservation of Confederate organizations throughout his life. He was also the first president of the Veiled Prophet Organization, an elite and secretive society that excluded Black members until the late 1970s.
 - Calls for the renaming recognized Kennard’s actions were at odds with the values we aspire to pass along to our children and that changing the name is a chance to align those values with a more appropriate role model.
- In 2018, the KCJA Equity & Inclusion (E&I) Committee founded the “Namesake Project” and held community events and discussions from 2018-2020 to educate parents about changing the names of locations named after Confederates, talking about race with children, and address the school community’s concerns.
- A “Namesake Fair” to generate alternative names was held, and an art and essay contest allowed students to explore the nominees’ lives.

HISTORY and BACKGROUND



- ❑ A school-wide survey showed that 70% of parents, students, and staff favored changing the name of the school. A primary vote was taken to winnow the Namesake nominees down to 3: Clyde Kennard, Mary Meachum, and Betty Wheeler.
- ❑ In summer of 2020, the Board of Education approved a new district-wide policy for renaming buildings.
- ❑ On August 11, 2020, the SLPS Board of Education (BOE) approved a motion to rename Kennard Classical Junior Academy (KCJA) to Classical Junior Academy (CJA) for the 2020-2021 school year.
- ❑ This decision was the culmination of several years of advocacy, archival research and community discussions on the part of many CJA parents, teachers, students, and community members, as well as the broader community members, as well as the broader community to remove Samuel Kennard as the namesake of the school.

CJA RENAMING TIMELINE



November 9, 2021
Review of Board Naming Policy

January 4, 2022
Committee holds their first meeting

April 26, 2022
Committee holds their third meeting

June 28, 2022
Board votes whether to rename school

December 14, 2021
Board names the members of the Advisory Committee

March 8, 2022
Committee holds their second meeting

June 14, 2022
Committee provides recommendations to the Board

POLICY



- ❑ If the Board or the Superintendent chooses to initiate a process, the Board/Superintendent shall create an advisory committee to recommend one or more names to the Board for consideration. Any names recommended by the advisory committee must be consistent with Board Policy.
- ❑ The advisory committee shall hold at least three community meetings: one to alert the community that a naming/renaming process has begun, another to solicit potential names, and another to receive feedback on what potential names that the committee is considering.
- ❑ For the advisory committee to be able to recommend a name to the Board, at least three-fourths of advisory committee members must vote to recommend the name. The advisory committee shall bring forward any recommendations within six (6) months of creation.

POLICY

CRITERIA



1. A facility or part of an existing facility may be named for an individual, group, organization, a place such as a landmark or neighborhood, or for any other reason determined by the Board.
2. The name must not already be in use by another District school or facility.
3. If a facility or part of an existing facility is named or renamed for an individual, group, or organization, the following shall apply:
 - a. The individual must be deceased for at least 12 months prior to the submission of the individual's name for consideration by the Board.
 - b. The individual must have historical significance, have performed exemplary services in the community, have displayed outstanding leadership and/or are of exemplary moral character.
 - c. The individual, group, or organization must embody exemplary qualities that can serve as a model of excellence and should adhere to the District's core beliefs and values.
 - d. The individual, group, or organization must have made a significant contribution, which may include a financial donation to the District, local community, state, nation, or have a connection to the District.
 - e. First consideration shall be given to local persons, but consideration may be also given to state, national, and international individuals where appropriate.

POLICY



□ **The advisory committee process shall also include the following:**

1. The Board shall direct the Superintendent or designee to inform the Board of any fiscal implications.
2. The advisory committee shall be open to all community members residing within the District boundary and shall include representatives of the current school community, alumni, and include members residing within the adjacent neighborhoods to the facility. **The committee shall review and recommend three unranked names for consideration by the Board.** The submission should also include how the name aligns with the criteria set forth below.
3. An individual Board member and/or the Superintendent may submit a name or names for consideration by the advisory committee and/or for consideration by the Board as part of naming or renaming a facility.



RENAMING COMMITTEE MEMBERS



- ❑ Kevin McKinney
- ❑ Tracy Fantini Spies (**Chairperson**)
- ❑ Nashad Carrington (**Vice Chair**)
- ❑ Dr. Steven-Kyle Jefferson (**Principal**)
- ❑ Lou Kruger
- ❑ Dr. Myra (Pendleton) Berry
- ❑ Dr. Nicole Williams
- ❑ Dr. Dedric Carter
- ❑ Dr. David Cunningham
- ❑ Cathy Sherwin
- ❑ Debra D. Irons-El
- ❑ Daniel Lang
- ❑ Susan Yardley-Vagnino
- ❑ Mallory Dauphin



*Sarah Nash, Emma Mueller, and Jamie Spitznagel were replaced by Dr. David Cunningham, Susan Yardley-Vagnino, and Mallory Dauphin midway through the meetings.

COMMITTEE PROCESS



- ❑ A committee of SLPS Board of Education members, Classical Junior Academy (CJA) PTO members, and community members met monthly from January to April 2022 to follow the BOE process and criteria to nominate individuals or other names as possible namesakes for CJA.
- ❑ The individuals considered for the renaming were drawn from a previous years-long process conducted by the CJA PTO (see History and Background), CJA Renaming Committee members, a community survey, and a survey of CJA students (see Community Input).
- ❑ Considering survey votes from the school and community and comments written in, the committee voted on six names. A majority vote by committee members in attendance at the April meeting was used to select the top three names. These three names were then submitted to the BOE for consideration.

COMMUNITY INPUT



- ❑ A community-wide survey was shared to make sure we cast a wide net to provide ample opportunity for many communities to respond and participate. The survey was created on Microsoft Teams and shared through SLPS website, CJA school newsletter, alumni emails and social media. The survey was available for three weeks. A brief biography sheet (see Appendix A) noting five individuals was created using the BOE Renaming policy as a guide.
- ❑ This brief bio sheet was linked in the survey. [Note: Clyde Kennard was an original nominee from the CJA community but did not meet the BOE Renaming policy criteria. His name was listed with this note in response to questions from the community as why they could not vote for Clyde Kennard]
- ❑ For the CJA-specific survey, students asked to vote because “it’s their school after all.” The principal, Dr. Jefferson, created a school-specific survey to be able to distinguish a students-only vote.
- ❑ There were **N=745** respondents from the city-wide survey. **N=150** students responded to the survey from the CJA school.



FINAL RESULTS

- ❑ Community write-ins and surveys included some suggestions to retain use of the current name “Classical Junior Academy (CJA)” in lieu of further renaming (26 write comments).
- ❑ Committee members voted to include Dr. Frances Gooden for survey consideration, who was a popular write-in vote as a long time SLPS educator and former principal at CJA. (10 write-in comments).
- ❑ Committee voted to move forward 3 names, unranked and in alphabetical order:
 - ❑ Marie Frankie Muse Freeman
 - ❑ Mary Meachum
 - ❑ Betty Wheeler

The Committee officially recommends the Board of Education keep “Classical Junior Academy” as part of the new name of the school.

APPENDIX A - SHORT BIO SHEET/RUBRIC



<p>Individual (listed x alphabet); No SLPS schools are named after these indivs.</p>	<p>Historical significance & Represents excellence and District's values</p>	<p>Contributed to or connected to District</p>	<p>Local indiv. considered first</p>
<p>Marie Frankie Muse Freeman (1916 – 2018)</p> 	<p>American civil rights attorney, and the first woman to be appointed to the United States Commission on Civil Rights (wiki)</p>	<p>In 1954, Freeman was lead attorney for the landmark NAACP case Davis et al. v. the St. Louis Housing Authority, which ended legal racial discrimination in public housing.</p>	<p>yes, moved to and practiced law in STL</p>
<p>Minnie Liddell (1939 – 2004)</p> 	<p>Co-filed a class action lawsuit against the BOE for the City of St. Louis to desegregate public schools (article)</p>	<p>Attended SLPS; worked to desegregate and improve the city of Saint Louis' education system.</p>	<p>yes, moved at early age to STL</p>
<p>Mary Meachum (1801 – 1869)</p> 	<p>American abolitionist and educator who helped enslaved people escape to freedom in the Underground Railroad (wiki)</p>	<p>The Meachums ran a school for free and enslaved Black people, which they later moved to a steamboat when the state of Missouri banned education for blacks in 1847.</p>	<p>yes, moved at early age to STL</p>
<p>Betty Wheeler (1932 –2011)</p> 	<p>Educator, visionary, founder & principal at Metro (articles, news)</p>	<p>Selected to found Metro HS and lead the school's transformation through the SLPS Magnet School system in 1980</p>	<p>yes, born and raised STL, graduated from Sumner HS</p>
<p>Arsania Williams (1875 – 1954)</p> 	<p>Educator; president of the MO Assoc. of Colored Women, & St. Louis Assoc. of Colored Women (wiki)</p>	<p>President of the Missouri State Association of Negro Teachers.</p>	<p>yes, raised in STL, graduated from Sumner HS</p>

QUESTIONS?



www.sips.org/rename

**We're renaming
our school, and
we want to hear
from you.**

