

DESA Name Change Committee Meeting 2

Public Meeting

February 27, 2024

6:05pm - Welcome: Whitney McGinnis

Purpose of Meeting: Share thoughts and suggestions for possible new names of DESA

Intro of Committee Members in attendance:

- Michelle Jones, Area Superintendent for Specialty Area in DeKalb County
- LaTonya Donald, Principal of DESA
- Bianca Hamilton, Former principal of DESA and current Visual Arts Coordinator for DCSD
- Danielle Botstein Tamez, DESA parent and former PTA VP
- Josh Stifter, DESA parent
- Samantha Fitts, DESA Parent
- Darryl Gayle, DESA student
- Bri'el Gordon, DESA PTA VP
- Brandy & Marquis Jackson, DESA parents
- Keith Jones, DSA Principal

Overview:

- Background of how request came about:
 - Dr. Donald: Given a letter from PAC and PTA from school community, wanting a name change bc students at Middle School level, for example, when they are performing, they want to not be named for an elementary school. Sent the letter to Area Superintendent, Dr. Jones & Mrs. Whitney McGinnis, who took the letter seriously and that's how we got here.
 - Mrs. McGinnis: Criteria for name change - either population or curriculum of school has changed. Since DESA was originally a K-7 (dates back to a time there weren't middle schools in the district, and elementary school went through 7th grade. 8-12 was high school). District wide philosophy in terms of where grade transitions occur, has changed. In keeping with that and trying to bring DESA into alignment, was extended to provide 8th grade services. This makes it eligible for a name change, since district wide philosophy of "What is an elementary school" definition has changed over time and we want to be cognizant of that. Part of the school district's process is to form a committee to review the possible suggestions for a name change. We did meet once already. Before the committee met, a survey was distributed at DESA which generated a robust list of potential names.

- Presentation of Names to the audience:
 - Mrs. McGinnis shows a slide with the list of names that are already on our list. Audience is invited to drop suggestions in the chat. The list shown is so suggested names aren't duplications. Audience is welcome to
 - List of names from the first survey (presented at the first meeting):
 - Samuel O. Williams Performing Arts School
 - Tyler Perry School of the Arts
 - State of the Arts Preparatory Academy
 - John Batiste School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Academy of the Arts
 - Dekalb Creative and Performing Arts Academy
 - Norma Rushing Arts Academy
 - John Lewis School of Good Trouble
 - Avondale School of the Arts
 - Cory Barksdale School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Academy of Excellence
 - Academy of Arts and Excellence
 - Dekalb Excelsior School of the Arts
 - Renaissance School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Arts Academy
 - Donald Glover Arts Academy
 - Dekalb Academy of Fine Arts
 - Dekalb School of Visual and Performing Arts
 - Dekalb School for the Arts Excellence
 - Second part of the process - when audience registered for this meeting, the survey was reopened so people could present names if they missed the first survey. This slide shows what names were suggested on the second survey. These haven't been reviewed by the committee:
 - Dekalb Magnet School for Performing Arts
 - Gifted and Talented Performing Arts School of Dekalb
 - Dekalb Intermediate School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Intermediate Performing Arts School
 - Dekalb County Elementary and Middle School of the Arts
 - Dekalb County Academy of the Arts
 - Dekalb Enrichment School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Early School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Magnet Academy
 - Dekalb Exemplary School of the Arts
 - Arts & Science Academy of Dekalb
 - Dekalb School of Excellence in the Arts
 - Dekalb Institute of Excellence in the Arts
 - Dekalb Academy of Artistic and Creative Excellence
 - Dekalb Premier School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Elemiddle School of the Arts

- Public Comment:
 - 6:19pm A few minutes are allowed for the audience to drop names in the chat. Also questions or clarification questions are permitted in the chat. The chat is to remain open until 6:25pm. Dr. Donald is tasked with taking down the names from the chat.
 - Once the time is up, audience members will not have access to the chat.
 - Committee members will be using the chat to vote on each of their top 3 names from the new list.
 - Question in the chat: Will only committee members vote? Yes - the purpose of the committee is to take all the recommended names and narrow them down. There will be an additional public input opportunity that will be another survey using the 3 final names that the committee feels are most reflective of the school curriculum and community of current time. The 3 names will go back out for a public vote and then the committee will come back together to review the survey results at a future meeting.
 - Question in the chat: Explain how committee members were chosen.
 - Dr. Jones: Based on board policy, requirements for a committee: Up to at least 15, minimum of 11 people. Board member in the district is a required member. Board member for feeder pattern schools (Ms. Diedra Pierce, Vice Chair, having technical difficulties and hasn't yet been able to join). Principals of any feeder schools are required members - Dr. Keith Jones (DSA) - important to be included bc feedback is valued. Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator for DCSD (Happens to be former DESA principal) - important for the future of the district for arts programs of K-12. Expectation is to include PTA board member, PAC member, DESA Performing Arts teacher who has been part of the school for many years, Community Member who has been part of performing arts, and a DESA student, additional members are DESA parents of various grade levels - include both elementary and middle school parents.
 - Mrs McGinnis: Recap - Try to select a good cross section including district staff, parents, parents on PTA and PAC, student voice, diversity by grade level and by area of artistic interest.
 - Technical difficulties of committee members unable to join - Dr. Keith Jones is on the call but we can't see him. Attempting to get Vice Chair Ms. Pierce on the call.
 - Mrs. McGinnis: Recap about reason for change. There was some concern that the name of the school could impact funding brought up at the last meeting. Those are two completely separate issues - funding is not affected by the name of the school, but the funding is an ongoing discussion that is being considered at length in a separate format. The name does not change the funding one way or the other - it is a neutral act.

- Shout out to appreciate the technical team.
- Approving the minutes from the first meeting: Committee members are asked to approve the minutes by using the hand raise icon in the zoom room.
 - Motion to approve the minutes
 - Did everyone see the minutes? Everyone except Darryl Gayle was able to review the minutes but we have enough committee members to vote if he abstains
 - Yes votes use hand raise icon
 - Ms. Fitts noted that her name is misspelled and asked if it can be corrected before she approves it. Recording secretary agrees to correct the minutes and redistribute with the correction
 - Yes votes - total 9, unanimous
- List of new names suggested:
 - Dekalb Academy of Fine Arts
 - John Batiste School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Arts Academy
 - Dekalb Early School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Academy of the Arts (x2 in chat)
 - Dekalb Theme School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Academy of Excellence
 - Dekalb Enrichment School of the Arts (x2 in chat)
 - Dekalb Excellence School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Academy of Arts & Sciences
- Both lists of new names are presented so the committee can look at all of them together and vote on the new names
 - - Question in the chat:
 - Why are we going over the names again? Because there is a public meeting requirement that we need to satisfy. Giving a final opportunity to everyone who missed the first survey. Want to give everyone a fair opportunity to participate.
 - Last 2 committee members unable to participate due to technical difficulties, but we need to move forward with the 2nd phase (6:40pm)
 - Reminders from the first meeting:
 - The first list was voted on at the first meeting. The top 3 names selected from the first meeting:
 - Dekalb Academy of Arts & Excellence
 - Dekalb Magnet School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Academy of the Arts
- Floor opened for committee discussion about the new list of names:

- Reminder from first meeting:
 - To expedite the process, we voted not to use people's names for the school because of the multiple steps required to obtain permission and verify that person's character.
- Context for why some names need to be eliminated:
 - "Theme" has a specific definition in the district, does not apply to magnet school
 - Gifted and Talented has a specific definition, does not apply to magnet school
 - "Fine Arts" limits the type of arts
 - "Excellence" is something we strive for, but shouldn't be considered in the name
- Concern raised about Dekalb Academy of the Arts - there is an unrelated dance school with that name
- There is a desire among some to retain the D.E.S.A. acronym, so some "E" words are in the options (e.g. Early, Excellence, etc.)
- Question: How is "Early" defined?
 - Early learning center = pre-k; Early College is another way it is used
- Question: Does anyone want to submit any of the names from the chat onto the short list:
 - Motioned and seconded: Dekalb Arts Academy
 - Motioned and seconded: Dekalb Early School of the Arts
 - Motioned and seconded: Dekalb Enrichment School of the Arts
 - (Enrichment definition: the action of improving or enhancing the quality or value of something."enrichment of the soil for more plant growth")
- Two more names submitted via email by a parent who was late to the meeting and didn't get to put in the chat: Dekalb Expression School of the Arts, Dekalb Expressive School of the arts. Because the DESA acronym is important to her.
 - In chat: Expressive was in the original list and was not selected
- Concern raised by Dr. Jones about Dekalb "Magnet" School of the Arts - it does not differentiate an age level. That was one of the finalists from the first meeting, but now we have some better options, so it might get removed from the list. Part of our creativity is working around the name DSA that the school already has. Also, we don't need to use the word "county" in any of the names.
- Suggestions from the survey for the short list:
 - Motioned and seconded: Dekalb Elemiddle School of the Arts
 - Motioned and seconded: Dekalb Elementary & Middle School of the Arts
- Finalized list of names compiled from the 3 lists (first survey, second survey, audience chat suggestions):
 - Dekalb Magnet School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Academy of the Arts
 - Dekalb Enrichment School of the Arts

- Dekalb Academy of Arts & Excellence
- Dekalb Elemiddle School of the Arts
- Dekalb Elementary & Middle School of the Arts
- Dekalb Arts Academy
- Dekalb Early School of the Arts
- Committee members directed to pick top 3 choices from this list and put it in the chat:
 - Darryle Gayle to Host and Panelists (7:17 PM)
 - Dekalb Elemiddle School of the arts.
 - Dekalb enrichment School of the arts.
 - Dekalb Magnet School of the Arts
 - Marquis Jackson to Host and Panelists (7:17 PM)
 - DeKalb Early Schools of the Arts
 - DeKalb Academy of the Arts
 - DeKalb Enrichment School of the Arts
 - Bri'el Gordon to Host and Panelists (7:17 PM)
 - Dekalb Academy of the Arts,
 - Dekalb Enrichment School of the Arts,
 - Dekalb Arts Academy
 - Danielle Botstein to Host and Panelists (7:17 PM)
 - Dekalb Enrichment School of the Arts,
 - Dekalb Arts Academy,
 - Dekalb Early School of the Arts
 - LaTonya Donald (DESA) to Host and Panelists (7:17 PM)
 - Dekalb Magnet School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Arts Academy
 - Dekalb Elemiddle School of the Arts
 - Board Member Mrs. Whitney McGinniss (District 2) to Host and Panelists (7:17 PM)
 - DeKalb Early School of the Arts
 - DeKalb Academy of the Arts
 - DeKalb Arts Academy
 - Bianca Hamilton (Curriculum & Instruction) to Host and Panelists (7:18 PM)
 - DeKalb Arts Academy,
 - DeKalb Magnet School of the Arts,
 - DeKalb Elementary & Middle School of the Arts
 - Samantha Fitts to Host and Panelists (7:18 PM)
 - 1. Dekalb Academy of the Arts
 - 2. Dekalb Enrichment School of the Arts
 - 3. Dekalb Elementary and Middle School of the Arts
 - Michelle Jones (School Leadership) to Host and Panelists (7:18 PM)
 - DeKalb Enrichment School of the Arts;
 - DeKalb Elementary and Middle School of the Arts;
 - DeKalb Arts Academy

- Dr. Keith Jones (DSA) to Host and Panelists (7:18 PM)
 - DeKalb Arts Academy...
 - DeKalb Academy of the Arts....
 - DeKalb Early School of the Arts...
- Josh Stifter to Host and Panelists (7:18 PM)
 - 1. Dekalb Academy of the Arts
 - 2. Dekalb Magnet School of the Arts
 - 3. Dekalb Elementary & Middle School of the Arts
- Danielle Botstein reads aloud all of the answers for Dr. Donald to write out a tally. It is agreed that we will re-tally using the chat log (Included above in these minutes)
- Tally is as follows:
 - Dekalb Arts Academy - 7
 - Dekalb Academy of the Arts - 6
 - Dekalb Enrichment School of the Arts - 6
 - Dekalb Magnet School of the Arts - 4
 - Dekalb Elementary & Middle School of the Arts - 4
 - Dekalb Early School of the Arts - 4
 - Dekalb Elemiddle School of the Arts -2
 - Dekalb Academy of Arts & Excellence -0
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- Top 3, according to tally:
 - Dekalb Academy of the Arts, Dekalb Enrichment School of the Arts, Dekalb Arts Academy
- Next Steps:
 - Community ballot. Top 3 name recommendations will be put together on a ballot. Policy stipulates there will be paper versions of the ballot and electronically distributed versions of the ballot that will go out to DESA and DSA, because of the feeder pattern and because those are the 2 related schools.
 - Next committee meeting date: Set for March 27, 6pm on zoom.
 - Goal for that meeting will be to have survey results compiled
 - Committee will review survey results
 - Will be waiting for an update from Operations to determine what the district will pay for in terms of signage and other things that will need to be updated to reflect the new name.
 - Ultimate Goal : committee will solidify a single name recommendation that will go before the full school board in May. The May deadline allows the school district to make changes over the summer and have a clean start in August.
- Suggestion:
 - Afford opportunity for the committee members who were unable to attend to vote on the final narrowed down list and add their numbers to the tally.

- Vote on allowing absentee committee members who were not in attendance to vote on the final 8 list:
 - Concern about 3 way ties raised. If there's a tie, Mrs. McGinnis will break the tie.
 - Concern about dance school named Dekalb Academy of the Arts
 - Mrs. McGinnis and Dr. Donald and Dr. Jones will meet to determine if that is a conflict and if that name or any other names for other reasons, need to be eliminated.(eg. Is there a character limit for the district?)
 - Vote to allow committee members to vote: 9 YES votes. 1 No vote. Majority will allow for the absentee committee members to vote.

Adjourned 7:35pm