

DESA Name Change Committee Meeting 3

March 27, 2024

Virtual Meeting

Call to order: 6:02pm

In attendance:

- Whitney McGinniss
- LaTonya Donald
- Deirdre P. Pierce
- Samantha Fitts
- Allison Mulkey (technical difficulties)
- Michelle Jones
- Zandra Taylor-Aoko
- Bianca Hamilton
- Josh Stifter
- Danielle Botstein
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Update between last meeting and this meeting:

- Community survey went out, 990+ responses

Goals of meeting: Committee to review results and make a final decision for recommendation to present to the board.

First order of business: Approve minutes from last meeting

- They weren't sent out so Ms. McGinniss did a screen share and Ms. Botstein pasted the minutes in the chat.
- Ms. McGinniss read through the minutes
- Ms. McGinniss asked if anyone had any questions about the minutes
- Mrs. Pierce motioned to approve the minutes and Dr. Donald seconded the motion
- Used "hand raise" icon to vote.
 - 9 yes
 - 1 abstain
 - The minutes are approved.

Addendum: Dr. Donald gave an updated report from the last meeting - the committee had voted to allow the committee members not in attendance the chance to vote on their top 3 choices.

- Their choices were as follows:
 - Mrs. Deirdre P. Pierce (board member)
 - Dekalb Magnet School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Academy of the Arts
 - Dekalb Elementary and Middle School of the Arts
 - Jessica Durham (Community Member)
 - Dekalb Academy of the Arts
 - Dekalb Arts Academy
 - Dekalb Academy of the Arts & Excellence
 - Mrs. Zandra Taylor-Aoko (Performing Arts teacher at DESA)
 - Dekalb Arts Academy
 - Dekalb Academy of the Arts
 - Dekalb Magnet School of the Arts

- Final Tally after the absent members' votes were recorded:
 - Dekalb Academy of the Arts - 9
 - Dekalb Arts Academy - 9
 - Dekalb Magnet School of the Arts - 6
 - Dekalb Elementary and Middle School of the Arts - 5
 - Dekalb Enrichment School of the Arts - 5

- Dr. Jones, Dr. Donald, and Ms. McGinniss met separately to debrief and eliminated Dekalb Academy of the Arts based on potential confusion the name could cause due to a business in Dekalb county with the same name.
- The final ballot presented to the community and stake holders is as follows:
 - Dekalb Magnet School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Elementary and Middle School of the Arts
 - Dekalb Arts Academy
 - Dekalb Enrichment School of the Arts

- Mrs. Pierce noted that she wanted to strike her vote for Dekalb Elementary and Middle School of the Arts
- Mrs. Fitts asked what the name of the conflicting business was and Ms. McGinniss answered that it is the "Academy of the Arts" in Dekalb County. It is a dance studio.

Survey results (screen share via Ms. McGinniss):

- 990 online survey responses
 - Largest group - DESA students, followed by DESA parents, followed by community members and DSA students/teachers.
 - Results:
 - Dekalb Arts Academy - 41%
 - Dekalb Magnet School of the Arts - 23%

- Dekalb Elementary and Middle School of the Arts - 20%
- Dekalb Enrichment School of the Arts - 16%

Comment from Dr. Jones: There are paper copies from DSA, need to confirm they are included. Dr. Donald confirmed that she has all of those paper ballots as well as paper ballots from DESA parents. The front runner of the paper ballot votes was also Dekalb Arts Academy. There were 32 paper ballots.

Ms. McGinniss makes a motion to confirm that the preferred new name of DESA, via the community ballot is "Dekalb Arts Academy", and will be submitted to the board as such. Seconded by Ms. Botstein.

- Voting by hand raise icon:
 - 9 Yes

Next meeting date - April 9, 6pm. Virtual.

- Orders of business in that meeting:
 - What the district will finance for name change costs & what the PTA will need to supplement for items not covered by the district
 - Approve minutes from this meeting
 - A formal memo will be put forth to the school board, which will be voted on at the May school board meeting.
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- Dr. Donald asks a question - according to minutes from the first meeting, we were planning on the April meeting being in person. Ms. McGinniss asks if anyone has a preference of virtual or in-person for that meeting. The general consensus is that virtual is preferred.
 - Mrs. Botstein asks if we are required to keep the results a secret. Dr. Donald and Ms. McGinniss confirms that we may answer people by letting them know the name that the committee is recommending to the board, but that the final decision requires the approval of the board. The minutes will become public record once they've been approved at the next meeting. Dr. Donald will let the families know the recommended name in her school-wide communications.
 - Motion to make April 9 meeting virtual, seconded, voted unanimously for virtual final meeting.
 - Mrs. Jones recommends that Committee Members attend the May 6 DCSD board meeting. Ms. McGinniss will check the agenda when it is released to let the committee know around what time the DESA name change will be considered, so committee members don't have to sit through the entire session, considering it will be several hours long. DCSD Board meetings are live-streamed if committee members are unable to attend - the link to the meetings is on the DCSD website.

Meeting adjourned 6:35pm