

Pine Ridge Rebranding Committee Meeting Notes

Date: April 24, 2025

Time: 6:05 PM – 6:25 PM

Chairperson: Dijon DaCosta, Sr.

Meeting Type: Virtual

Good morning, Pine Rebranding Committee,

Thank you all for the time, energy, and commitment you gave throughout the Pine Ridge Elementary School rebranding process.

Opening Remarks – Chairman DaCosta’s Talking Points

We began this journey on March 13, 2025, by launching a public awareness campaign to inform and engage the community around the rebranding effort. Outreach efforts included:

- **Media Coverage:**
A public article was published by Decaturish on March 20, 2025, introducing the rebranding effort and inviting community feedback.
- **District Website:**
Information and access to the survey were posted on the official DeKalb County School District website.
- **Social Media Promotion:**
Rebranding updates were shared across the district’s official platforms, including Facebook, Twitter/X, and Instagram.
- **Text Messaging:**
Families received text alerts with direct links to the community survey and updates about the process.
- Community feedback played an important role in our decision-making process.

Of the 137 responses received (April 17):

- 89 respondents (73.55%) supported renaming Pine Ridge Elementary to Stephenson Elementary, citing alignment, consistency, and school pride.
- 32 respondents (26.45%) opposed the change, raising concerns about the school's legacy, cost, and cultural impact.
- 16 respondents (13.2%) offered mixed or neutral perspectives, often emphasizing other priorities such as equity, inclusion, and resourcing.

This feedback helped inform our discussions and led to a clear direction for the future of the school.

We held three formal committee meetings following the public announcement:

1. **April 9, 2025** – Community Feedback Review
Time: 6:05 PM to 6:30 PM
Attendance: 10 members

2. **April 17, 2025** – Mascot and Visual Identity Discussion

Time: 6:05 PM to 6:44 PM

Attendance: 13 members

3. **April 24, 2025** – Final Committee Vote

Time: 6:05 PM to 6:25 PM

Attendance: 21 members

During the final meeting, the committee **unanimously** voted to rename Pine Ridge Elementary to **Stephenson Elementary**. The **Jaguar** was selected as the new mascot with 73 percent of the vote, officially retiring the Panther. In addition to the name and mascot change, the school colors will shift from red and black to **royal blue and silver**, aligning with the Stephenson Middle and High School colors.

This rebranding aligns not just in name and imagery, but in values and direction. Stephenson Elementary now completes a full academic pipeline alongside its middle and high school counterparts, allowing scholars to walk a unified path from Pre-Kindergarten through graduation with a shared sense of identity and Jaguar pride.

Next steps:

Principal Lindsay Scott and I will be working with the DeKalb Schools Communications Team to finalize the updated mascot design, branding materials, and visual assets. The full rebranding proposal will be presented for formal approval during the Board of Education meeting on **May 12, 2025**.

(Notes: Based on feedback from the committee, we are requesting that the current Jaguar mascot be revised to include a visible pupil, making the design more approachable for elementary students. Additionally, we've asked the Communications Team to provide four alternative mascot designs for Stephenson Elementary to consider. These design options should be submitted no later than May 2, 2025.)

This rebranding is not about letting go of the past, it's about building on our foundation and preparing for the future. The legacy of Pine Ridge will always be honored through the generations of scholars and educators who helped shape it. What we've done together is establish a stronger identity, a clearer vision, and a more united community.

Attendees:

Dijon DaCosta (Chair)

Marcus Jelks

Frederico Rowe

Jamila Rivers

Erick Hofstetter

Glenda Barner

Geoffrey Powell

Chelsey Bruce

Kaliyah Mitchell

Joshua Sellers

LaDena A. Bolton

Tyherrona Gosse
Lindsay Scott
Deyanna Hartsfield
Lisa McGhee
Mutiat Wilson
Marcia Coward
Michelle Elias
Amber Dunn
Takeesha Morrison
Kalisha Sackey

Closing Motions:

With no objections, the meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm