

# High School Name Change Proposal

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# Issues

- Community members and current students have approached the District about changing the name of Lee High School.
- Superintendent and administration has been working on a plan for exploring the name change but wanted to wait until the end of the school year (to minimize disruption for students).
- There are many policy and legal issues to consider in this process.

# Policy Issues

## ■ HCBOE Policy 2.9:

- Renaming an Existing School, Facility, or Property – A recommendation to rename an existing school, facility, or property will be considered only after the city-at-large has been given a full opportunity for input by public notice. The Board shall contact the PTA and/or other existing organized school support groups of the affected school. A minimum of sixty (60) days from the date of public notice shall be given before action is taken by the Board.

# Policy Issues

- HCBOE Policy 2.9.1 (Naming for Distinction):
  - Can be to honor the extraordinary, distinguished contributions of individuals to humanity, to the country, to Alabama, to Huntsville, or to the school system.
  - Except in the case of posthumous recognition, proposed naming for an individual associated with the District, it is recommended that not less than three years shall lapse between the end of service and a naming proposal.
  - The Superintendent shall determine whether the person is worthy of the honor and whether the recommendation has the support of the occupants of the building and principal, before making a recommendation to the Board.

# Policy Issues

- HCBOE Policy 2.9.2 (Naming for Financial Support):
  - Donors may be individuals, families, organizations, foundations or corporations.
  - Naming a building, wing, room, lecture hall, etc. will be at the discretion of the Superintendent and the Board, depending on size, age, prestige, location, original cost, etc.
  - Gift commitments must be at least 10% of current value and replacement costs.
  - \$25,000 is the recommended minimum for single classrooms

# Legal Issues

- Alabama Memorial Preservation Act of 2017
  - Ala. Code § 41-9-230, et seq.
  
- Defines “Memorial School” as “A K-12 or two-year postsecondary institution or facility that is located on public property and has been erected for, or named or dedicated in honor of, an event, a person, a group, a movement, or military service”.
  - Ala. Code § 41-9-231(4)

# Legal Issues

- “No memorial school which is located on public property and has been so situated for **20 or more years** may be renamed except as provided in Section 41-9-235.”
  - Ala. Code § 41-9-232(c)
  - New Lee High School was built and opened in 2011.
- Ala. Code § 41-9-235 sets out a waiver process for seeking to rename property.

# More Policy Issues

- HCBOE Policy 2.9.3.a and .c (General Provisions):
  - No naming will be approved or sustained that, in the judgment of the Superintendent and the Board, will call into serious question the public respect of Huntsville City Schools.
  - When a building or significant area has been named, the school district will continue to use the name so long as the building or area remains in use and serves its original function. When the use has changed such that it must be demolished, substantially renovated, rebuilt, or sold, Huntsville City Schools may retain the use of the name, name another comparable room or facility or discontinue the use of the name.

# More Policy Issues

- HCBOE Policy 2.9.3.b (General Provisions):
  - Names of facilities or areas should lend prestige to the school and to staff, students, and community. The credentials, character, and reputation of each individual, organization or corporation for whom the naming of a school property is being considered shall be carefully scrutinized and evaluated. Nominations submitted for consideration must be accompanied by supporting documentation.

# Next Steps



# Parallel Tracks

- Superintendent to determine whether:
  - Community is interested in changing the name and
  - What the replacement name should be.
  
- If the Superintendent determines that a new name is appropriate and what the new name shall be, she must give 60 days of notice prior to recommending the name change.

# Parallel Tracks

- While Superintendent is working with the community, legal counsel will work with the State of Alabama Attorney General's Office to ensure compliance with the Alabama Memorial Preservation Act of 2017.
- There are multiple steps that can be taken:
  - Informal Guidance
  - Formal Attorney General Opinion Letter
  - Seeking a waiver from the Committee on Alabama Monument Protection
  - Pay the \$25,000 fine – Ala. Code § 41-9-235(d)

# Parallel Tracks

- To prevent slow down on the renaming process, legal counsel will work at the same time the Superintendent is working to determine possible name changes.

# Questions?



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