
Subject: Request to Restore Historic School Names: Stonewall Jackson High School and Ashby Lee Elementary School

- April 3, 2024
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Dear Members of the Shenandoah County Public School Board,

We, the members of the Southern Campus community, respectfully request that you consider restoring the original names of **Stonewall Jackson High School** and **Ashby Lee Elementary School**. These schools hold historical significance and have been integral parts of our community for many years.

As you already know, we have conducted a survey of the citizens in Districts 1, 2, and the Edinburg area of District 3 on their choice of school names. Our survey results indicate overwhelming support for this restoration:

- **Stonewall Jackson High School:**
 - **91.3%** of respondents expressed a desire to revert to the original name.
 - Alumni, parents, and community members have voiced their opposition to the recent name change.
 - The legacy of Stonewall Jackson, while complex, remains an important part of our local history.
- **Ashby Lee Elementary School:**
 - **91.3%** of respondents favor returning to the original name.
 - Ashby Lee Elementary has a rich tradition in education of the local elementary school students for decades.
 - The community values the historical connections to both Turner Ashby and Robert E. Lee as prominent Virginians and local heroes.

We understand that the decision to rename these schools was made in response to discussions surrounding Confederate symbols. However, we believe that revisiting this decision is essential to honor our community's heritage and respect the wishes of the majority.

We kindly request that the School Board move forward with the Restoration of the school names immediately placing this matter on the school board agenda and beginning the dialogue with community members, including alumni, parents, and students, to consider the following:

1. **Community Input:** The overwhelming majority of the stakeholders in the Southern Campus Districts desire the names to be restored.
2. **Historical Context:** Acknowledge the historical context of the original names and their cultural significance.

3. **Representative Democracy:** As elected officials, please consider the majority sentiment while making decisions on behalf of the community, as opposed to the top-down process used by the previous School Board.

We appreciate your dedication to our schools and the well-being of our students. Restoring these names would demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity, respect for history, and responsiveness to community feedback.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to a thoughtful discussion and a decision that reflects the best interests of our students and community.

Sincerely,

The Coalition for Better Schools
