

## Update From the Naming of Facilities Committee

The work of the Naming of Facilities Committee has continued during January. The committee met on January 9, 2023, to discuss the proposed timeline for the review of Burnley-Moran and Johnson Elementary Schools.

The community survey was discussed and a request made to review the proposed survey and provide any feedback before it was opened for the community. After some suggested changes, the survey was edited with a request for additional feedback. The survey was open to the public on January 13, 2023, and received 396 responses. Based on the recommendation from the committee, the survey was closed January 31, 2023.

### **Public Survey Data**

From the survey, approximately 61 percent believed or strongly believed that Burnley-Moran should be changed compared to approximately 23 percent who believed or strongly believed the name should not be changed. Another 16 percent selected a middle option of neither supporting nor opposing a change. The ratio of people expressing support to opposition was about 3 to 1 (with 3 in favor.) The proposed names included on the survey, as determined by the committee, were Blue Ridge Mountain or Blue Mountain (an attempt to maintain BME as the initials), Rivanna Elementary, and Black Oak Elementary. There was also a choice of “none of the above”. The results are as follows for combining each name with first and second choice:

Blue Mountain or Blue Mountain received 177 votes  
Rivanna received 221 votes  
Black Oak received 110 votes

For Johnson, approximately 50 percent believed or strongly believed that Johnson should be changed compared to approximately 30 percent who believed or strongly believed the name should not be changed. Another 20 percent selected a middle option of neither supporting nor opposing a change. The ratio of people expressing support to opposition was 5 to 3 (with 5 in favor.) The proposed names included on the survey, as determined by the committee, were Cherry Avenue, Forest Hills, Landmark, Victory and Village. There was also a choice of “none of the above”. The results are as follows when combining each choice with first and second choices:

Cherry Avenue received 150 votes

Forest Hills received 139 votes  
Village received 70 votes  
Landmark received 68 votes  
Victory received 41 votes

At both schools, the selection “none of the above” tracked strongly with feedback that the school name should not be changed.

## **Community Forum**

A community forum was conducted January 26, 2023. Relatives of both Ms. Burnley and Ms. Moran were present and shared information about both women. Mr. Eugene and Mrs. Lorraine Williams’ daughter was also present and provided information regarding why Johnson should be renamed using Williams in the title. Community members and students did provide opinions both for and against changing the names of both schools. Some believed names should not be for persons and should instead be based on place and purpose. Others shared that students and the community had connections with the names and didn’t want a change.

## **Student Voting**

The third and fourth grade students at both schools participated in an election on January 30, 2023. There were 103 voters at each site. Choices and results for each school are as follows:

### **Burnley-Moran-103**

Blue Mountain-43

Blue Ridge Mountain-7

Rivanna-17

Abstain-7

Write-in-26 Of the write-ins Burnley-Moran/keeping the name-20 votes, all others, only one vote each

### **Johnson-103**

Cherry Avenue-17

Forest Hills-21

Landmark-17

Abstain-2

Write-In-44 Of the write-ins, Johnson/keeping the name-28 votes, Hagfish-3 and all others, only one vote each

## **Committee Meeting**

The committee met Tuesday, January 31, 2023, to review the data from the activities in January. There was a great conversation about the results, next steps and process. Among the discussion topics was the idea of whether the decision to keep or change the school name hinged on the particular individuals, all of whom served our white schools as teacher, principals, or superintendent during the era of school segregation, or whether the era in which they served was more important than their individual biographies. In other words, the names uphold and honor an era (school segregation) that does not reflect our current values and work.

Although there was discussion about the smaller margin of data supporting a name change at Johnson, the committee recognized that the largest group from the public survey at each school did support a name change and did recommend a name change for both schools. At both schools, two names (Blue Mountain and Rivanna at Burnley-Moran, and Cherry Avenue at Johnson) earned about equal support. With large numbers of write-ins for students, a discussion ensued about surveying students again. It was decided that might not be beneficial but staff will be surveyed with two choices for each school. Once this is completed, the committee will meet again to develop a final recommendation to share with the Board at the March meeting.